

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 14 January 2022)

1. FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022-2023 - LICENSING SERVICE (MINUTE NO 22)

As part of the annual review of budgets, the Committee has reviewed non-statutory fees and charges for the Licensing Service for 2022/2023.

The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences, registrations and permits. Many of these schemes allow the Council to charge a fee, payable by an applicant for a licence, permit or registration, in order to cover the costs of the administration of those licence types.

Fees are set under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 and the Council has no discretion in amending these. Gambling premises licence fees are capped and permit and lottery fees are fixed amounts. The fee regimes for both have not been revised since the implementation of both Acts in 2005 and 2007 respectively. However, the Council is able to set fees for a number of other licence types; Taxis (drivers, vehicles and operators), Animal Welfare (boarding breeding, riding and pet shops), Piercing (tattoo, acupuncture and skin piercing) and Pleasure boats (boatmen and vessels), residential caravan sites and scrap metal dealers (site and collectors).

The Committee noted that the Coronavirus 19 pandemic had a significant impact on the economy and businesses in the New Forest, having been affected by a reduction in trade and loss of income. Whilst the Licensing Service was unable to provide refunds or reductions in fees over this time, it had worked with the businesses to assist them in continuing to operate as far as possible, and the Council had administered with government grants. There are no proposed changes to the taxi and private hire fees at this current time due to a comprehensive review taking place of the taxi licensing policy in 2022, taking into account new statutory guidance, the fee structure, public safety and best practice and will be consulted on with Members, the trade, the public and all other relevant organisations.

In order to support the continuation of those businesses who had struggled financially in 2021/22, the Committee recommended, and the Council agreed, to not raise licensing fees for 2021/22. It is now proposed that Discretionary fees be increased in line with inflation, to take effect from 1 April 2022.

Any financial implications have been reported for budgetary control and as part of the financial plan.

RECOMMENDED:

That the recommended fees for the financial year 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A to General Purposes and Licensing Committee item 4 of the Committee agenda, be agreed.

CLLR S J CLARKE

CHAIRMAN