

Report to Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 16th October 2019

Subject: Taxi Licence & Animal Welfare Licence fees



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Officer contact for further information: Sally Devine - Regulatory Service Manager

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry

Recommendations:

To note an uplift in the fees

Report:

Animal licensing:

New Animal Welfare Licensing Regulations were introduced in October 2018 to update and replace section 1 of the Pet Animals Act 1951. The new Regulations require a robust inspection and reporting regime and require inspecting officers to be qualified to NVQ Level 3 by October 2021. As a result the licensing team have introduced new inspection processes for all premises such as Animal Boarding Establishments, Home Boarding, Riding Schools & Pet Shops and officers will start the NVQ training this November.

The Regulations allow the licensing authority to recover all reasonable, costs without making a profit, for the administration of the licensing function which includes processing applications; carrying out inspections; producing reports and setting licence conditions; anticipated enforcement activity, officer training, general governance and anticipated submission of data requests to the Secretary of State. In setting the fees we are guided by the LGA Guidance on locally set licence fees and the Procedural Guidance Notes and Practical Guide to Fee Setting that support the Animal Welfare Regulations. The Procedural Guidance states that the licence fee should be in two parts, charging separately for the cost of application and enforcement.

It is apparent that the officer time spent in administering this licensing function is considerably more than previously anticipated and the existing charges of £250 plus vet fee do not reflect the true cost to the Council. A benchmarking exercise and cost recovery calculation has been carried out based on officer time and associated costs, in accordance with Government guidance and the new fees below will be recommended to Cabinet as part of the Council's overall fees and charges schedule for 2020/21. The fees will be reviewed annually.

Proposed Fee for Animal Welfare Licence for 2020/21	
Application fee and renewal fee (all except home boarding)	£329
Grant of Licence	£36
Total Fee	£365
Application fee and renewal fee (home boarding)	£223

Grant of Licence (animal boarding)	£30
Total Fee	£253
Licence and other replacement cost	£10
Variation and transfer fees administrative	£43
Variation involving inspection	£132

Taxi Licensing:

The Service Manager & Licensing Team Manager have carried out a benchmarking exercise and a cost recovery calculation based on officer time and associated costs for proposed Taxi Licence fees for 20/21. Comparing these calculated figures against the existing taxi fees, with an annual inflation factor applied, the results are generally comparable and do not justify a full consultation to the trade on what would be marginal adjustments. The current licence fees for 2019/20 will therefore continue to be applied for 20/21 with the appropriate inflationary increase applied. The report to Cabinet will propose that the fees and charges for all other activities falling within the Licensing Service for 2020/21 will be the existing fees for 2019/20 with the general uplift applied.

Resource Implications: None

Administration of the licensing function is carried out within existing staff resources. The legislation allows local authorities to cover their reasonable costs without making a profit.

Legal and Governance Implications: None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The Licensing Team ensures that the Council meets its licensing objectives to prevent crime and disorder; protect public safety, prevent public nuisance and protect children from harm under the Licensing Act 2003 which links closely to the Council's overarching corporate objective to keep the district safe. It is appropriate that the Service is resourced adequately and that the reasonable costs are recovered from the businesses that benefit from the service.

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management: N/A

Equality and Diversity: N/A