

REVIEW OF LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES 2014/15 (L000)

MEETING: LICENSING COMMITTEE

DATE: 11 DECEMBER 2013

REPORT BY: LICENSING MANAGER

WARDS: ALL

COMMUNITY FORUMS: ALL

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for revised licence and registration fees for 2014/15.

2.0 **BACKGROUND**

2.1 In accordance with the Council's financial regulations it is necessary for all fees to be annually reviewed.

2.2 The services relate to the regulation, control and administration of the following areas:

- Gambling Act 2005.
- Sexual Entertainment Venues - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

2.3 Fees for the Licensing Act 2003 are set nationally and cannot be altered by the Council.

2.4 Members are reminded that these are statutory services and as such are not subject to market forces. The Council has discretion about the setting of fees.

3.0 **SCOPE**

- 3.1 A summary of proposed fees is provided at Appendix A, which sets out the fees and charges that were agreed for 2013/14 and the proposed increases for 2014/15. The figures have been rounded up or down to assist with cash handling.
- 3.2 Paragraph 5 of this report outlines the financial implications for the council. In light of those implications above inflation increases of 5% or 7% are sought for all fees and charges. Such increases are necessary as the licensing service currently runs at a net cost to the council of £40,010.

4.0 **EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS**

- 4.1 Fees and charges in respect of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 are not included in this report as the new fee structure has only just been approved by the Council.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council is heavily dependent on central government grants to support its budget. Since 2010 these grants have continued to be cut as part of the Government's austerity measures. All the indications are that the funding reductions are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. At the same time the Council has faced significant pressure on its other major income sources. The Government has continued to exercise tight control on council tax increases and for a number of years has offered short term grants as an incentive for authorities to freeze their council taxes. Also, throughout the economic downturn the Council has found its income from charging for services has been under pressure.
- 5.2 The latest medium term budget forecasts show significant and increasing deficits in future years (2013/14 - £550K, 2014/15 - £1.6m, 2015/16 - £2.4m). The Council is, therefore, faced with having to develop some radical plans for reducing its expenditure. This will include cutting back on low priority services, improving the efficiency of high priority services and generating more income from fees and charges.
- 5.3 The net cost to the council for providing a licensing service is £40, 010.

5.4 In order to make an impact of this net cost above inflation increases in fees and charges are suggested.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 That members determine what increase to impose on fees and charges as shown in Appendix A to this report.

For further information on this report contact Trevor Durham, Licensing Manager, on (34)5203.