

**REVIEW OF LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES 2014/15 (A000)**

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MEETING: APPEALS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

DATE: 11 DECEMBER 2013

REPORT BY: LICENSING MANAGER

WARDS: ALL

COMMUNITY FORUMS: ALL

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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:

- Animal welfare at premises providing accommodation for breeding or the sale of animals;
- Businesses carrying out skin or body piercing, electrolysis, tattooing or acupuncture. Businesses who offer skin piercing services are required to be registered with the Council but this is a one-off payment;
- Private Hire and Hackney Carriage fees;
- Miscellaneous licensing fees.

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 A second Unmet Demand Survey for hackney carriages commenced in September 2013 and a report will be presented to the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in January 2014. A provisional charge has been included for the cost of a third survey which would be added to the hackney carriage vehicle licence fee as it's cost must be recovered from the licence holder and not the general fund. Imposition of this charge will, however, depend on any decisions made by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee.

4.2 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.

4.3 The consumable licensing items are subject to price changes by our supplier. Appendix A shows the current costs recharged on the current stock but prices will be adjusted when suppliers alter the costs to us.

4.4 Appendix B shows the comparison of fees within Derbyshire for this year but does not indicate what increase, if any, those authorities are proposing.

## 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 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.