

REVIEW OF LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES 2023/24

MEETING: APPEALS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

DATE: Date to be fixed

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 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

Approval is given to an increase in fees and charges as outlined in Appendix A from 1 April 2023.

3.0 BACKGROUND

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

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

- Private Hire and Hackney Carriage fees;
- Scrap Metal collectors and sites;
- Miscellaneous licensing fees.

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

3.4 Fees under the Gambling Act and for sexual entertainment venues are considered by the Licensing committee.

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 In accordance with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, fees and charges are required to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the cost of providing the service is recovered appropriately.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan is constructed on the basis that additional income will be generated from fees and charges. The process being followed for the review of income to be realised includes an assessment of each fee to identify how it meets the Councils strategic purposes and the level of increase that is proposed as well as taking account of present economic conditions. The fees have been based on a robust estimate of the impact of cost increases and demand within the services and the Councils overall financial position. This includes assessing the affordability of any of these increases to our residents and customers. Cost pressures and changes in demand include:

- Increases in energy costs
- Inflationary increases (October CPI 11.1%) resulting in increases in supplier costs and materials
- NJC Pay Claim for 2022-23 which has resulted in a higher than budgeted for pay increase for staff and a higher than anticipated budget for the 2023-24 Pay Claim
- Any specific service issues around cost increases or service usage

4.0 **SCOPE**

- 4.1 An increase is required for all fees and charges in the current circumstances. A summary of proposed fees is provided at Appendix A, which sets out the fees and charges that were agreed in 2022/23 and the proposed increase; the figures have been rounded up or down to assist with cash handling.
- 4.2 Legal precedents dictate that licensing authorities should not make a profit from the delivery of these services. At present these budgets are showing a significant deficit of £18,950 once the recent pay award is included. This deficit is made up of both

controllable and non-controllable expenditure, as the majority is a recharge from the licensing administration cost code.

- 4.3 The proposed increases will return the budget to a cost-neutral position.
- 4.3 The overwhelming majority of this budget comes from the taxi budget, where projected income is £216,490.

5.0 EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

- 5.1 In December 2019 members decided to retain the limit of 110 hackney carriages. The committee also decided to commission another unmet demand survey in 2022, the survey to be funded by hackney carriage licence holders, for which licence holders are charged £10 at each six-month renewal.
- 5.2 The results of this years unmet demand survey are due to be considered by members in the near future.
- 5.3 Appendix B shows the comparison of taxi and private hire fees within Derbyshire but does not indicate what increase, if any, those authorities are proposing.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed increases will enable the council to provide these services as close to cost neutral as possible.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Approval is given to an increase in fees and charges as outlined in Appendix A from 1 April 2023.

Further information on this report can be obtained from the licensing manager, Trevor Durham at trevor.durham@chesterfield.gov.uk

