

24 January 2017

Planning and Licensing Committee

Setting of Licence Fees for 2017/18

Report of: *Paul Adams, Principal Licensing Officer*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to agree fees and charges associated with licence applications for the 2017/18 period, for recommendation to Council for setting.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **To recommend to Council the adoption of the licence fees as detailed in Appendix A.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Most licence applications attract a fee, different licensing regimes have different ways in which the fees are set, which generally is by one of three ways.
- A statutory set fee.
 - A locally set reasonable fee that has by statute, a capped maximum amount.
 - A locally set reasonable fee with no maximum cap.
- 3.2 With the exception of the statutory set fees, any fee charged must be based on cost recovery, no profit can be made on the licence fee income.
- 3.3 Fees that are set by statute, cannot be varied and must be charged as they are set within the legislation, this relates to all licences under the Licensing Act 2003 (Alcohol and Entertainment) and some of the Gambling Act 2005 Fees.

- 3.4 Fees that can be set locally with a capped maximum must be set on a cost recovery basis up to the cap. If the cost recovery is less than the capped amount then less than the cap should be charged, if it is higher than the cap then a loss will need to be made. This relates to most fees under the Gambling Act 2005.
- 3.5 Fees that can be set locally without a cap, must be set on a cost recovery basis only, they cannot be used to generate an income to perform other functions of the Council. This relates to Taxis, Sex Establishments, Scrap Metal Dealers, Massage and Special Treatments, Street Trading and all Animal Welfare Licences.
- 3.6 Guidance does exist in relation to fee setting in the form of:
- Home Office Guidance on setting Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 Fees,
 - LGA Guidance on Locally Set Fees,
 - Welsh Technical Panel templates,
 - Case law.
- 3.7 Generally fees cannot make a profit, case law has established that any surplus must be carried forward, and any deficit can also be carried forward and recouped.
- 3.8 Benchmarking of fees could be used only as a comparison, and should not be used as a fee matching exercise. Each authority will have different costs, structures and processes which could create differences in fees.
- 3.9 Brentwood Council last set its local fees in 2016.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 A Schedule of proposed fees for the 2017/18 period are attached as Appendix A.
- 4.2 It is intended that the fees will come into effect from 1 April 2017, subject to approval by Council.

Animal Welfare Licences

- 4.3 Animal welfare licences for the purpose of this report applies to:
- Boarding Establishment Premises (Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963)
 - Dangerous Wild Animals (Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976)
 - Dog Breeding Establishments (Breeding of Dogs Act 1973)
 - Pet Shops (Pet Animal Act 1951)
 - Riding Establishments (Riding Establishments Act 1964)
 - Zoos (Zoo Licensing Act 1981)
- 4.4 In addition to the fee the applicant will also continue to be invoiced for the fee charged to Brentwood Council for the Vet inspection of the premises. The Vet fee will vary from premises to premises.
- 4.5 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire

Private Hire Operators Licences

- 4.6 There is a small deficit on this area of licensing, however it is proposed not to increase the fee at this stage as the deficit is predicted to reduce from 17/18. The situation will be monitored and will be reviewed at the end of this year once changes to the Licensing Team structure and process have imbedded.
- 4.7 If this fee is to be varied then the statutory consultation process would need to be followed.

Vehicle/Proprietors Licences

- 4.8 Vehicle licensing is in deficit from previous years, which will be carried forward into next year. Current predictions based on keeping the fee at the same level will reduce the deficit in the next 3 years. The situation will be monitored and will be reviewed at the end of this year once changes to the Licensing Team structure and process have imbedded.
- 4.9 If this fee is to be varied then the statutory consultation process would need to be followed.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licences

- 4.10 All Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Drivers Licences are currently granted for 3 years, unless there is a good reason not to do so.
- 4.11 Currently the cost of the DBS check is charged in addition to the fee. This fee will rise to £52 from £44 to reflect the current cost incurred of this check.
- 4.12 A DVLA Licence check will be carried out annually, the cost of this is now included in the cost of the licence application.

- 4.13 A DVLA Group 2 Medical is required every three years unless age or medical conditions require otherwise, the cost of the medical is met by the applicant and is not included in this fee.
- 4.14 The application fee for new applicants is to include up to 4 attempts to pass the Knowledge Test, further attempts will be subject to an additional fee as provided in Appendix A.
- 4.15 A deficit was incurred for drivers licences from last year, which has been carried forward, resulting in a significant increase in the licence fee for this year.
- 4.16 It is proposed to increase the new licence fee to £505 from £300 and the renewal fee will rise to £435 from £240.
- 4.17 The situation will be monitored and will be reviewed at the end of this year once changes to the Licensing Team structure and process have imbedded.

Sex Establishments

- 4.18 Sex establishments for this purpose are to include Sex Shops, Sex Cinema's and Sexual Entertainment Venues.
- 4.19 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18

Licensing Act 2003

- 4.20 These fees are currently set by legislation, although there is a proposal that these are to be set locally, a change to the legislation is not expected this year.

Gambling Act 2005

- 4.21 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18.
- 4.22 The maxim fee is currently charged.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

- 4.23 It is proposed that a renewal fee is introduced which is lower than a new licence to reflect the difference in time taken to process the a renewal application.
- 4.24 There is no proposal to change the other fees charged for 2017/18.

Table and Chair Licensing

- 4.25 It is proposed to introduce an incremental fee to encourage smaller businesses to licence where our policy allows. The difference in fee reflects the different levels of work involved in processing the application, and the potential objection it would attract.

Street Trading

- 4.26 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18

- 4.27 A review of the current provisions and extent of the scheme will take place this year and any variation to the fees charged will be reviewed at that time.

Special Treatments

- 4.28 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18

Road closures

- 4.29 There is no proposal to change the fee charged for 2017/18

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The fees and charges have to be agreed by Council and can not be set by this committee. The fees proposed are on a cost recovery basis where possible.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There is no consultation required under legislation relating to any of the discretionary fees outlined in this report that are subject to change. However these will be published on the Council's website and are in all cases open to challenge by way of Judicial Review should they be inappropriately set.

- 6.2 If changes to the Hackney carriage or Private Hire Vehicle fees, or the Private Hire Operator fees, are considered then public consultation must be carried out in accordance with the requirements contained within Section 65, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 None

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 The impact of the revised fees and charges will be incorporated within the 2017/18 Budget.

Legal Implications**Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer****Tel & Email: 01277 312860 /daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 8.2 There are no additional legal implications other than those already mentioned above and particularly in section 3.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

- 9. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

10. Appendices to this report

- Appendix A - Proposed 17/18 Licensing Fees and Charges

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