



LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 4th April 2016

PRESENT : Cllrs. Randle (Chair), Patel (Vice-Chair), Tracey, McLellan, Lugg, Llewellyn, Brown, H. Norman and Pearsall

Officers in Attendance

Lisa Jones, Food, Licensing and Markets Manager
Vikki Fennell, Solicitor, One Legal
Andrew Cummings, Management Accountant
Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. C. Witts, Hanman, Hansdot and Pullen

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made on this occasion.

32. FEES FOR VEHICLES, OPERATORS AND DRIVERS LICENCE 2016/17

The Food, Licensing and Markets Manager presented the report which invited the Committee to determine the level of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence fees for 2016/17.

She noted that the report had been presented to the previous meeting of the Committee on 15 March when it had been deferred to await further information and clarification of the financial data. She advised that the additional information was contained within Appendix 6 to the report.

The Management Accountant confirmed that the Council was permitted to set fees for drivers, vehicle and operators at a level which would cover the cost of providing the service.

He referred Members to Appendix 6 which explained the principles of internal recharging of the costs of providing support services. He confirmed that the process, which applied to all Council services, was accepted as being in accord with proper accounting practice and guidance.

He noted that the process, which was a statutory requirement, varied for certain services and he cited the Guildhall as a particular example.

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He advised that the employee related costs had remained fairly static and were forecast to be approximately £64,000 for the next three years. The average cost recharged per team member had been stable at an average of £41,957.

The recharges were calculated on a basis of 1.5 staff members which had been increased from 1 staff member to reflect more accurately the work of the team.

In answer to a question relating to the recharge of nearly £10,000 for communications, he believed that figure could have included Information Technology as the categories tended remain fixed from year to year.

He explained that accommodation costs would fluctuate as functions were split up and moved around the organisation.

He noted that the costs of the Legal Service were recharged on a 'per capita' basis related to the number of people within a service using legal support.

The Chair noted the deficits expected in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and was advised that if the number of licences issued in those years followed the established trend the service was expected to break even.

Councillor Llewellyn was advised that the Group Manager recharge had fluctuated due to a reduction in the number of services within the group.

Councillor McLellan questioned whether the Council needed a new method of allocating costs as the costs falling on services increased while the number of staff employed by the Council reduced.

Members noted that the report had originally suggested that the new fees would be effective from 1 April 2016 and that following the deferment of the report the new fees would have to take effect by 1 June.

Members noted that the proposed five year fee for small operators was £2,480 compared to £1,475 for the same licence in Cheltenham whilst the remainder of the five year fees proposed were comparable to Cheltenham.

The Vice-Chair was advised that fluctuations in income reflected the differing renewal dates of licences and a large number of three year licences were renewed in 2014/15.

The Chair and Councillor Llewellyn thanked the Management Accountant for his explanation.

Members questioned whether the proposed variations to operator structure in Column 3 of Appendix 3 should be the subject of further consultation.

The Solicitor advised the Committee that should Members not wish to adopt the variations to operator structure detailed in Column 3 without further consultation due to time constraints, they should consider recommendation at paragraph 2.1 (1) of the report.

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RESOLVED that the proposed published fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved to take effect from 1 June 2016.

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 7 June 2016 at 6.30 pm.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of Conclusion: 7.10 pm

Chair