

Licensing Regulatory Committee

Review of Licensing Fees for Animal-related Licensing 12 February 2015

Report of Chief Officer (Health & Housing)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review the costs and licensing fees for animal-related licensing to enable Members to approve the level of fee for 2015/16

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That the licensing fees for animal-related licences be determined for 2015/16 on consideration of the options contained in this report.**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report is concerned with the setting of the level of licence fees 2015/16 for :

- Commercial animal boarding establishments
- Home boarding establishments
- Dangerous wild animals
- Riding establishments
- Pet shops
- Dog breeding establishments
- Zoos

The setting of such fees is a non-executive function, and therefore a matter for this Committee.

1.2 Licensing fees for the premises under consideration and referenced as part of this review are set according to the legislation specific to those premises:

- Commercial animal boarding and home boarding establishments - Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963
- Dangerous wild animals – Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 as amended.
- Riding establishments – Riding Establishments Act 1964
- Pet shops – Pet Animals Act 1951
- Dog breeding establishments – Breeding of Dogs Act 1973
- Zoos – Zoo Licensing Act 1981

1.3 The council's Fees & Charges Policy states that when setting charges, the general aim is to cover the cost of the service, reflecting the full cost of provision including recharges. It is not lawful, however, for the council to seek to make a profit from licence fees that are within its discretion. The Fees & Charges Policy in relation to licensing fees offers a

standard of good practice, although it is not binding on Licensing Regulatory Committee.

- 1.4 It is also a requirement of the council's Fees & Charges Policy that fees be reviewed annually. Time monitoring of officer activity in the animal related licensing process has been carried out during the current financial year to better inform the level of fees being set. The process involved in animal licensing includes processing of applications and payments, carrying out inspections and advice visits, and preparing licences, reports and letters etc. The direct costs of this process therefore mainly consist of staffing resources and associated running costs.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 It is currently assumed that there will be in the region of 60 animal related licences premises during 2015/16. The direct costs described in 1.4 have been proportionately applied to each type of licence based on direct officer time spent using time monitoring carried out during 2014/15.
- 2.2 There are also indirect costs associated with animal related licensing, such as complaint investigation, enforcement, software maintenance, staff training, policy work and committee costs. As further work is needed to determine the full impact of these, it is intended to continue monitoring indirect costs over the coming financial year, when a report will be brought to Licensing Regulatory Committee to decide whether to fully recover licensing costs when approving revised fees in future years.
- 2.3 It is recommended therefore, that there be an increase in the fees charged for 2015/16 of 1.5% to cover inflation in line with other fees and charges applied during the current Budget process. The recommended fees are attached in Appendix A.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis

- 3.1 The options proposed are:

Option 1

Approve a 1.5% increase with regard to animal welfare licences as set out in Appendix A.

Option 2

Approve a different level of percentage increase as decided by Committee.

Alternatively, it would be open to Committee to consider alternative fee structures.

- 3.2 The Officer preferred option is option 1, i.e. a 1.5% increase for animal related licences.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Other fees and charges within Health & Housing are being increased by 1.5% therefore approving Option 1 would be consistent with this position.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

This report relates to licensable businesses both small and large and this raises considerable complexity of affordability. This report endeavours to summarise licensing costs and fee setting options.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Members are reminded that animal licensing is a statutory function legislated by the relevant Acts listed within the Report, although it is for the Local Authority to determine the appropriate charge.

The officer preferred option will generate a small additional income of £100 (rounded) compared to the current year fee income. The draft 2015/16 budget includes £7,500 (rounded) for licence fee income as demonstrated by the following table:

Licence Type	Licence No's	Current Fee income £	Proposed Fee Income at 1.5% £	Difference £
Horse Riding Establishments	6	843	856	13
Dog Breeders Licence	4	562	570	8
Pet Shop Licence	12	1,748	1,775	27
Animal Boarding (Commercial)	10	1,457	1,479	22
Animal Boarding (Home)	27	2,633	2,673	40
Zoo Licence	1	151	153	2
Total	60	7,394	7,506	112

Should Members opt for a different option / percentage, then subject to how material they are, these would need to be further appraised and fed into the annual budget process.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancaster City Council Fees & Charges Policy
Animal Boarding establishments Act 1963
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 as amended
Riding Establishments Act 1964
Pet Animals Act 1951
Breeding of Dogs Act 1973
Zoo Licensing Act 1981

Contact Officer: Sue Clowes
Telephone: 01524 582740
E-mail: sclowes@lancaster.gov.uk
Ref: LRC9