

COMMITTEE	Licensing
DATE	17 March 2015
DIRECTOR	Ewan Sutherland (Acting Corporate Governance)
TITLE OF REPORT	Licensing Application Fees 2015 -2016
REPORT NUMBER	CG/15/31
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee of the proposed level of application fees for licences administered through the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and other miscellaneous statutes and to obtain the Committee's approval for the fees to come into effect on 1 April 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee maintains fees at their current level and approves the fees set out in Appendices 1 and 2B to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In terms of Section 12 and Paragraph 15 of Schedule 1 to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Licensing Authority shall "charge such fees as they may determine to ensure that the total amount of fees is sufficient to meet the expenses of the Authority in exercising their functions under Parts 1 and 2 of this Act and this Schedule". The proposed fees achieve cost recovery to the Licensing Authority.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications as a result of this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

## 5.1 Civic and Miscellaneous Application Fees

In determining the level of fees to be set, the actual costs for the current financial year (2014/15) were considered. Staff time is recorded electronically against the different licence types. This enables us to calculate accurately the costs to be attributed to each licence type. The management information shows that there has been an increase in the number of some licences and a reduction in the number of others processed since the Committee last approved the fees in 2014. Overall, there has been no significant change.

For most of the fees, the position has worked out to be cost neutral and no change is proposed this year to the level of fees.

In recognition of the change in legislation from 1 April 2012 bringing free events within the scope of the licensing regime, the Committee resolved in January 2012 that a 75% fee reduction be applied to all public entertainment licences from community, charity, voluntary and religious groups. The position has been monitored and will continue to be monitored over the next financial year.

The current and proposed fees for 2015/16 are attached at Appendix 1.

## 5.2 Taxi and Private Hire Car Application Fees

The proposed fees were issued to the Taxi Consultation Group members on 19 February 2015. A breakdown of costs has also been provided at Appendix 2A.

The number of private hire car operator licences has reduced by 3. The number of taxi drivers has remained static. Taxi licences numbers are lower at the moment despite increasing the limit in November.

Costs have increased this year principally due to increased time spent on taxi related matters this financial year and the team being fully staffed. The licensing enforcement function has been considerably enhanced following the decision of Police Scotland no longer to provide a taxi inspector. The team now undertakes amongst a number of tasks, a much wider investigation of taxi complaints (both from members of the public and from the taxi trade itself), taking action as necessary depending on the outcome, and has The workload is much greater than originally anticipated. There is no capacity to address work which is necessary to meet aspirations of improving the service both to applicants and the public. It is intended therefore to address this by putting forward a business case for an additional Enforcement Officer.

There will also be implications flowing from the Air Weapons and Licensing legislation currently under consideration once it is enacted and in force. At the moment it is difficult to predict the precise impact or costs potentially attached. It is therefore proposed to maintain fees at their current level. This will cover costs and allow a small margin for contingencies.

The current fees and proposed fees for 2015/16 are attached at Appendix 2B.

6. IMPACT

Public – The purpose of the Licensing regime is to contribute to the safety of the citizens of Aberdeen who use any of the services covered by licences. The report is likely to be of interest to the public who may use any of the services licensed and to licence holders who pay application fees. It is likely to attract media interest.

Equality – No equalities issues arise from the report as the fees apply to anyone who wishes to apply for any licence covered by the legislation and no EHRIA is required.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Failure to set fees at appropriate levels will not comply with the licensing authority's duties under the Civic (Scotland) Act.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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