



Licensing and Regulatory Committee	Wednesday, 20 July 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Review of Fees and Charges (Environmental Health)**

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1. Introduction

Members will recall that at the last meeting of this Committee, the fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation and other housing matters were updated and approved.

In updating the website and the fees and charges list, the opportunity has been taken to review all the Environmental Health department fees.

2. Recommendations

That the revised fees are approved.

3. Information

3.1. Background

The Council sets fees (some of which are fixed by law) for the statutory requirements that it provides and for general services to the public. In the past the fees that have been set for the general services have been shown as VAT inclusive (VAT is not paid on statutory charges). However it is not clear that this was taken account of when setting the fees. Copies of both the existing and proposed fees lists are attached in Appendix 1.

Most of the changes to the fees are to ensure the VAT element is properly added to the cost of providing these services rather than included within a global fee. For example it is proposed to charge £50+VAT (£60) for an average rodent treatment that is currently charged at £50 including vat. Of which the Council currently receives £41.66.

This service includes contact centre costs, staff wages and on costs, vehicle provision, maintenance and materials for three separate visits to the premises being treated. The amount of time taken on each treatment will vary but will be in the order of 2.5 hours including travel time and approximately £3 for bait costs.

At the VAT exclusive payment the Council continues to effectively subsidise the provision of certain pest control services to residents.

This report is an interim measure as full review of the pest and dog control services is due to be carried out and that will consider what services should be provided as well as the cost. Members will be consulted for that review.

3.2. Details of Proposed Changes to Fees

Apart from the fees where the VAT element of 20% has been added there are some additional changes that are proposed.

3.3 Cockroaches

As a minimum of 5 visits are required to treat an infestation it is proposed that the fee should reflect this with an extra fee added for the initial survey that is required. The Council charge will be £150+VAT. Any further visits will be charged at the single visit rate of £25 + VAT.

3.4. Dog Control

Stray dogs that are found by the public may be collected by the “Dog Warden” and then either returned to the owner, if they can be identified, or taken to the Councils kennels. Stray dogs reported at night are collected by an out of hours contractor. A charge is made to the dog’s owner not the person finding the dog. The dog warden service is shared between officers and the contractor and may require an officer to travel to pick up the collection van, then travel to collect the dog and book it into the kennels or take it to the owner and travel back to base. Travel alone will take between 30 minutes and hour. The current charge of £20 +VAT does not reflect the cost of this service and it is proposed it is increased to £50 +VAT and £100+VAT for each subsequent return in 6 months-some owners “use” the service to mind their dogs. The contract for out of hours work is subject to commercial confidentiality but is several thousand pounds per year. In addition to the Council fees owners also have to pay a £25 statutory fee.

3.5. Food Export Certificate.

These are issued to food businesses that want to export food outside of the EC. This service includes not just the issue of certificates conforming to the third country requirements but extra inspections of premises in addition to the domestic legislative requirements. Currently these are £ 75 +VAT and it is proposed to increase them to £100 + VAT – most businesses will recover the VAT.

3.6. Hourly Charges for Officer’s Time

From time to time Officers provide other professional services as part of the Councils functions e.g. factual statements to solicitors for damages claims etc. It is proposed that the charge for these should be £46 +VAT (55.20) as this is the cost already calculated and approved for housing enforcement (although VAT is not chargeable for the latter functions).

4. Additional Information

These proposals are not based on actual costs of services and are all set below the cost to the revenue account. Some of the services are required by statute, although costs are determined by the Council, others are discretionary services. The level of support to these services needs to be considered in a full review and the purpose of this report is only to adjust the fees for the remainder of this financial year pending a full review.

Benchmarking against other local authorities is difficult. At least two Leicestershire authorities do not provide a pest control service and in the others charges range from £20 to £90 for a rodent treatment (subject to a variety of different conditions and exclusions). Each authority has considered its own level of support to the services they provide.

Apart from the exceptions reported in para 3. This report has sought to maintain the current policy for charging but clarifying the VAT element before the policy is reviewed

fully.

Background Documents:-

Fees and Charges 2016/17

Proposed Fees and Charges 2016/17

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	It is important that the Council maximises its income in order to make sure that it recovers the costs of the services provide only.
Legal (AC)	Some fees and charges are determined according to legislative requirements.
Risk (DL)	If fees and charges are not regularly reviewed the revenue fund will over subsidise services particular to individuals and businesses
Equalities (DL)	These charges apply to everyone equally and make no changes to those eligible for the services so there are no equalities issues.
	Equality Assessment:- <input type="checkbox"/> Initial Screening <input type="checkbox"/> Full Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable