

Appendix A

Public Protection Fees and Charges - Supporting Information

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1. The net revenue budget for 2021/22 has been calculated taking into account:
- The annual cost of living rise (£65.25K)
 - Incremental rises effective from the 1st April 2021 (£36.7K)
 - Minor NI Changes
 - Increase in pension contributions notified to the host authority
 - No inflationary rise has been applied to supplies and services or contractual payments

This gives a total net revenue budget for 2021/22 of **£3.876M**

- 1.2. The split between the authorities proposed by the JPPC is as follows:

Authority	21/22 Percentage	Net Budget Allocation	Increase om 1920/21
Bracknell Forest	25.83	£1,001,000	£43.6K
West Berkshire	39.96	£1,549,110	£54K
Wokingham	34.21	£1,326,470	£63.1K

2. The Impact of Covid19 – Loss of Income

- 2.1. Very few areas of local authority budget setting has not been impacted by the Covid19 pandemic. The services provided by the partnership are no different and have been impacted in a number of different ways an including Loss of Income

In the period April 2020 - August 2020 it is anticipated that the total income lost due to licence surrender, non-renewal etc. is around £85K.

Income continues to fall as licences come up for renewal or licences are surrendered. We have seen reductions in the taxi and private hire trade whose revenue is intrinsically linked to the hospitality and business sectors as well as airport and holiday fares. All of these revenue streams are under pressure and without significant recovery it is likely many more drivers and vehicles licences will not be renewed in due course.

The effects on hospitality are significant. A number of restaurant chains have announced closures and these include premises within the PPP area. The number of public houses continues to decline and at this time it is not known

how many what the effects will be as we move through autumn and into winter and the use of outdoor spaces is no longer viable. There are then also potential implications for recent regulatory changes such as the 10pm curfew on licenced premises, hotels and takeaways. In the last few days further announcements have been made that could have implications for these sectors should we move to tier two or three.

Gambling establishments in the form of betting shops were already closing following the capping of stakes on ‘fixed odds terminals’. A number that closed due to lockdown business restrictions have not re-opened.

There has been also a significant reduction in licenced events although the number of events licenced and unlicensed is now picking up and because of the Councils responsibility under the Coronavirus regulations granting local powers to control events the service has a significant increase in workload. An event for which a £21 TEN fee (set by law) may be payable can create many hours of work.

Animal establishments have all faced significant financial challenges to a lesser or greater degree. Almost certainly the most challenged aspect of the sector is animal boarding establishments who rely on either caring for people’s pets whilst they are away from home or face other personal challenges or who provide day care for people’s dogs whilst they are at work. Like taxis and private hire they face the collateral impact of changes in other sectors.

All in all it is not known what the licensing income base will be in 2021/22. We will keep the Committee and the Councils informed of emerging trends and budget variances. In the meantime we continue to mitigate and manage risk by keeping posts vacant and using temporary staff where expedient. It goes without saying that the higher the loss the more difficult this will be to manage without more fundamental structural change as critical mass is lost.

By way of illustration the number of taxi and private licenses surrendered or not renewed between January and September was as follows:

Area/Type	Chauffeur Driver	Hackney Driver	Dual Driver	Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	Private Hire Driver Licence	Private Hire Operator Licence	Private Hire Vehicle Licence	PH Vehicle Dispensation	Home to School (community) Transport Driver	Home to School Transport Vehicle
Bracknell										
Decrease*	12	0	16	18	8	5	43	3	6 (increase)	7

3. Supporting Information – Fees and Charges

- 3.1. At the meeting of the Committee in December 2017 (when it considered the 2018/19 fees and charges) a number of matters were decided. It was agreed that as a matter of principle that all fees and charges should be set on the basis of full cost recovery. In 2018/19 a generic hourly rate for the service

was set at £55 p/h as the basis of cost recovery. This was increased in 2019/20 to £57 per hour and was held at this level for 2020/21. For 2021/22 the full cost of the service, including internal support service re-charges (as per Council budget build processes) and the current establishment lists were updated which resulted in a new rate of £59 p/h. This is the figure used for fee setting for 2021/22, unless specified.

3.2. In calculating this fee a range of factors have been considered including the wide variety of council overheads each of the partners must contribute to, the levels of staffing, their costs, contracts and the necessary training to maintain a competent workforce.

3.3. All fees considered by this Committees will go forward to full Council as part of the budget setting process. Statutory consultations for taxi and private hire vehicles and private hire operator fees would of course be conducted as a matter of course. If other consultation / notification is felt appropriate the Committee have the ability to ask for this.

3.4. **Animal Welfare Establishments**

A new licensing regime for Animal Welfare Establishments e.g. pet shops, animal boarding, riding establishments etc. entered into force in October 2018.

For 2019/20 the fees were capped to the levels for 2018/19. This gave the service and the licence holders' time to adjust to the new and significantly more detailed and comprehensive licensing regime.

The fees set for 2020/21 gave rise to a significant level of concern being raised by those involved in Home Boarding (Day Care) for dogs. These concerns have been looked at in detail and a proposal on a new methodology can be found at **Appendix B** to this report. This is based on the principle that there is basic fee for compliant businesses and non-compliant businesses will pay a higher fee where, for example, additional visits of chasing of information is needed.

It is worth noting that the new regime is risk based. In Wokingham and West Berkshire those with the highest standards of compliance who were granted a three year licence have seen on marginal increases under the existing methodology. They will see a reduction under the new methodology compared to 2019/20.

The whole basis of the Regulations is improved standards. It is hoped that we can work with licence holders to get to the stage that they all meet the criteria to be classed as low risk and can achieve the granting of a three year licence.

3.5. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

There have been a series of exchanges with interested parties in relation to the fees set for issuing 5 year HMO licences. This focussed on compliance

with the Services Directive and the level of transparency regarding the formation of the hourly rate that applied. In response to this question a review was carried out by the Joint Management Board and the findings are detailed in **Appendix C**.

3.6. Fees for Licenses Granted for 2 or more years

There are a number of licence fees proposed which run for 2 or more years. Given the uncertainty faced by many sectors it is proposed that in such cases the fee can be paid in equal annual instalments over the period of the licence.