

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Public Protection Partnership Fees and Charges</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 25 January 2018
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Norman Jorgensen, Executive Member for Environment

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Sound Finances and Value for money.  
Providing services to the community on a cost recovery basis

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive agree to:

- 1) apply the 2018/19 fees and charges within Wokingham Borough for Public Protection services as set out in Appendix 1;
- 2) vary the fee for Animal Boarding for 2017/18 and then in line with recommendation 1 above for 2018/19.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Public Protection Partnership undertakes Environmental health, licencing and trading standards services on behalf of three partners, Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough Councils. The fees and charges are not set by the partnership but by each individual partner authority.

The Public Protection Partnership Joint Committee recommends fees and charges to each partner authority. In line with WBC's approach to setting fees and charges. This Joint Committee agreed recommendations for fees and charges for 2018/19 at its meeting on 12 December 2017. The recommended fees are based on cost recovery and for 2018/19, on an increased average of 3% indexation.

Also proposed is a change to the fee to administer Animal Boarding licences for the current financial year 2017/18. This is recommended following a revised process being developed to reduce the officer time involved in administering the process and a full risk assessment of the impact. If approved, the varied fee would be first licence application - £265 and a renewal of £185.

## **Background**

Public Protection Partnership carries out environmental health, licencing and trading standards services on behalf of three partners, Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough Councils and commenced in January 2017.

The new arrangement is significantly different to the previous shared service arrangement in its governance approach. A Joint Committee made up of two representatives from each partner authority sets the strategic direction, policies and financial arrangements of the shared service. This Joint Committee makes recommendations to the partner authorities about budget and fees and charges, and the Council partners then set these through the Council's budget and fee and charges setting process.

## **Fees and charges for 2018/19**

The fees and charges recommended for 2018/19 for PPP shared service are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. These recommendations were agreed by the Joint Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017. They are based on cost recovery at a cost of £53 per hour plus a 3% indexation to those fees adopted by the Council for the previous financial year.

A cost recovery mechanism is the approach adopted by other WBC services and the average indexation of 3% proposed by PPP is below the 3.6% agreed by WBC Executive in November 2017 for other services.

## **Animal Boarding Fee**

There is a statutory requirement to licence animal boarding premises and it has been checked that all local authorities in Berkshire license these premises. At its meeting in November 2016, WBC agreed the fee to administer Animal Boarding licences for 2017/18. This was a universal fee based on full cost recovery at the agreed rate of £53 per hour.

The 2017/18 fee was based on the cost of processing animal boarding licence applications including two visits per annum to each licence holder, and the wider enforcement regime. This totalled seven hours hence the fee being set out at £371. This represented an increase of £198 on the 2016/17 fee.

There has been substantial amount of concern raised by those renewing these licenses and as a result of the concerns raised, the process has been amended and agreed by the PPP Joint Committee at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The licensing regime and would proposed would make the following amendments:

- The number of visits would be reduced from two per annum to one. Should follow up visits be required as a result of none compliance these would be charged at the hourly rate. Non-compliance is rare.
- As renewals take less time than initial licencing, a reduced fee is applied to renewals.

The above proposal would reduce the time spent on the licencing function to 5.0 hours for a new licence and 3.5 hours for a renewal. This includes processing, invoicing, inspection and where necessary enforcement of the wider regime. Applying the hourly

rate the proposed licence fees would be £265 for an initial application and £185 for a renewal. This is comparable with other authorities in Berkshire and similar to the fee for 2016/17. These will be subject to the inflationary rise for 2018/19 as per Appendix C.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year 2017/18	£0k	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year 2018/19	£0k	Yes	Revenue
2019/20	£0k	Yes	Revenue

#### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

Fees and charges are based on cost recovery

#### **Cross-Council Implications**

None

#### **List of Background Papers**

PPP fees and charges agreed by WBC November 2016

Other Berkshire local authorities fees and charges for Animal Licences

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<b>Date</b> 18 December 2017	<b>Version No.</b> 1

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