

BODY: General Licensing Committee

DATE: 20th March 2017

SUBJECT: Resourcing of the Licensing Function

REPORT OF: Melanie Thompson, Head of Customer First

Ward(s): All

Purpose: To advise Members of the costs of additional administrative support for the licensing function

Recommendations: Members are recommended to;

Approve that no additional recruitment is made at this time and await the design of the joint service delivery teams due for completion December 2017

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the General Licensing Committee held on 9 January 2017, Members resolved that; the possibility of funding an administrative post in support of the licensing function using part of the surplus fees and charges fund, be investigated.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In order to ensure that council tax payers are not subsidising the work involved in the administration of licensing functions, income is raised through licence fees. These fees must not be used to raise revenue but instead are set at a level which aims to cover the cost of administering the function within the constraints of regulation.
- 2.2 The forecast for income & expenditure over the next 3 year period is:

	2017/2018 FORECAST (£)	2018/2019 FORECAST (£)	2019/2020 FORECAST (£)
Total Expenditure	145,673	149,173	153,673
Total Income	143,875	143,875	143,875
Net expenditure	1,798	5,298	9,798
Balance c/f	(53,729)	(51,930)	(46,632)
(Surplus) / Deficit	(51,930)	(46,632)	(36,834)

Members noted at the last committee meeting that although forecasting a net surplus of £36,834 by the end of 2019/2020, the Licensing team intends to make legitimate use of the surplus made in 2014-17 by carrying out the following

initiatives:

- Implement a penalty point scheme
- Undertake an enhanced enforcement role
- Additional Training – i.e. Child Sexual Exploitation/Safeguarding
- Continue to resource an additional Specialist Advisor on licensing and enforcement.

As the proposed measures above are not accounted for, the forecast surplus of £36,834 is likely to be lower by the end of that period. However, the net outcome is not expected to go into deficit.

3.0 Additional Caseworker Costs

- 3.1 The cost of employing an additional member of the casework team for 2017/18, grade band C (SCP 17 to 20) would be:

Appointment at SCP 17	£17,809
Oncosts	<u>4,925</u>
Total	£22,734

- 3.2 The revised forecast for income & expenditure over the next 3 year period would be:

	2017/2018 FORECAST (£)	2018/2019 FORECAST (£)	2019/2020 FORECAST (£)
Expenditure	145,673	149,173	153,673
Caseworker	22,734	23,277	23,845
Total Expenditure	168,407	172,450	177,518
Total Income	143,875	143,875	143,875
Net expenditure	24,532	28,575	33,643
Balance c/f	(53,729)	(29,197)	(622)
(Surplus)/ Deficit	(29,197)	(622)	33,021

These figures do not take into account the four initiatives above in 2.2 and therefore the deficit forecast in 2019/2020 would be higher.

- 3.3 Members agreed the fees & charges for the period 2017/2020 at the committee meeting on 9 January 2017. Therefore to provide an additional caseworker, the fees and charges would need to increase from 2020 to cover the deficit of £33,021 that would occur in the budget plus the ongoing cost of the caseworker of £24,699 a total of £58,000.

The fees would need to increase significantly to achieve the £58,000 and this would not include an increase in other recharges and expenditure.

An approximate guide of the required fee increase from April 2020 would be a vehicle licence increase of £83 per year (55% increase) and a driver licence increase (currently renewed every 3 years) of £249 (79% increase).

4.0 Alternative Resourcing – JTP Phase 2

- 4.1 From April 2017, work will commence on designing the joint service delivery teams. This will be an opportunity to fully review the staffing levels in Specialists and Casework that support the Licensing function across Eastbourne and Lewes. The joint teams will deliver a more resilient service with more staff suitably qualified and trained to cover during periods of peaks in service, leave, sickness and to coach and mentor staff moving into new roles.
- 4.2 Through the JTP with Lewes, there will be staff at risk of redundancy that would be eligible to apply for a caseworker role. The timescale for this recruitment is completion by December 2017.

5.0 Legal Considerations

- 5.1 None

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 The cost of administering the taxi licensing function is met by licence fee income. The objective is to set fees and charges at fair and proportionate levels, so that the income received does not exceed the cost of the function.
- 6.2 Vehicle licence fees would need to increase by £83 per year and driver licence fees by £249 (3 yearly) to cover the cost of an additional caseworker to support licensing.
- 6.3 Alternative resourcing through the JTP will bring additional support and resilience to the licensing function across Specialists and Casework.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to consider;

The detail in this report regarding the increase in fees and the detail regarding the new joint service delivery teams

And to approve that; no additional recruitment is made at this time as the design of the joint service delivery teams will commence in April 2017.