

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

14 November 2016

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision

1 HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) AND CARAVAN SITE LICENSING

Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges in respect of the mandatory licensing regime for Houses in Multiple Occupation and Caravan Sites for 2017/18.

1.1 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

1.1.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a licensing regime for HMOs of three storeys or more; occupied by five or more persons living in two or more households. There are currently 13 HMO properties licensed by the Council.

1.1.2 The aim of licensing is to improve the controls on HMOs and to raise the standard of some of the highest risk properties that are often occupied by some of the most vulnerable people, whilst maintaining an adequate supply of rented accommodation.

1.1.3 The licence is for a maximum of five years and cannot be transferred. The licence can end as a result of the passage of time, the death of the licence holder, the sale of the property or the revocation of the licence by the local authority. The licence is held on a public register maintained by the local authority.

1.1.4 Following a review of HMO licence fee charges no increase is proposed for 2017/18. The current charges and estimated income for 2017/18 are detailed in the table below:

| Service | Current Charge | Estimated Income Full Year 2017/18 |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| New HMO licence application fee | £480 | £480 for one new licence application |
| Renewal of a HMO licence application fee | £360 | £720 for two licence renewals due in this period. |

- 1.1.5 The charge for a new HMO licence application fee is comparable to our neighbouring Kent authorities of Maidstone at £435, Tunbridge Wells at £420 and Sevenoaks at £593. Over the five year period the fee of £480 equates to a cost of £96 per annum and £8 per month.
- 1.1.6 The charge for the renewal of a HMO licence application is slightly lower than our neighbouring authorities of Maidstone at £385 and £420 for Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.1.7 This lower cost for renewal is attributed to it being less administratively burdensome to check licence details and determine priority for inspection. This data is already available and it is the case of checking the layout and amenities of the property have not changed since the last application.

1.2 Caravan Site Licensing

- 1.2.1 The Mobile Homes Act 2013 amended the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 to allow local authorities from the 1 April 2014 to charge a fee for the licensing of residential mobile (park) home sites (“relevant protected sites”) and recover their costs in undertaking this function.
- 1.2.2 A caravan site must have planning consent for use as a caravan site before it can be licensed and once licensed it remains in perpetuity until a change of use or planning consent has expired.
- 1.2.3 Following a review of the caravan site licence fee charges for residential mobile (park) home sites no increase is proposed for 2017/18. The current charges and estimated income for 2017/18 are detailed in the table below:

| Service | Current Charge | Estimated Income Full Year 2017/18 |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| New caravan site licence application fee | £350 | £350 for one new licence application |
| Transfer of a caravan site licence | £125 | £125 based on the transfer of one caravan site licence. |

- 1.2.4 The caravan site licence fee charges are comparable to our neighbouring authority of Tunbridge Wells, which from April 2017 will be £300 for a new licence and £175 for the transfer of a licence. Sevenoaks and Maidstone do not currently have a charging policy for the licensing of residential mobile (park) home sites.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None arising from this report.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 The proposed charges for the licences are based on the average Officer time in completing the required works.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 None arising from this report.

1.6 Recommendations

1.6.1 It is therefore **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) The existing charges for licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Caravan Sites as detailed above remain unchanged be **AGREED** with effect from 1 April 2017.

Background papers:

Nil

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