

RURAL ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

INCREASE IN FEES/CHARGES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is to request that higher fees are charged on collection of stray dogs from the kennels, for carrying out risk assessments for private water suppliers and for water supply sampling beginning in April 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Committee approve an increase in charge for collection of a stray dog from the kennels to £50.
- 2.2 That Committee approve a standard charge for dealing with Private Water Supplies at £40 per hour or each part thereof, this includes carrying out an investigation, a risk assessment, granting an authorisation, check monitoring or audit monitoring.
- 2.3 That Committee approve an additional charge for taking a chemical water sample to cost price plus £40 for administration.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 A fees and charges report came to REEA on 08/09/10. At that time, the Stray Dog Collection Service was out to tender and it was not known how much the charge would be from April 2011. The provisions of the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 are now being introduced on a graduated basis.
- 3.2 With regard to stray dogs, within our current contract with College Garth kennels there is a standard charge to Melton Borough Council of £45 for collection of a stray dog. The existing charge rate to the dog owner is £35 which means that we are operating at a loss. The new proposed charge is to cover the charge from the kennel plus £5 toward administration costs (please note 5.3 below).

Under The Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992 (section 149(5)), the minimum sum of £25 is prescribed as the amount to be paid by a person claiming to be the owner of a seized dog before he is entitled to have the dog returned to him, there can be additional charge to cover expenses, hence £45 recovery of the standard charge to Melton Borough Council.

- 3.3 The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 introduced that the local authority may charge a fee for the following activities regarding Private Water Supplies. The fee must be a reasonable cost of providing the Service and are subject to maximums.

Activity	Cost per hour	Maximum
Risk assessments	£40	£500
Investigation	£40	£100
Granting of Authorisation	£40	£100
Check monitoring	£40	£100
Audit monitoring	£40	£500

3.4 With regard to water sampling we currently charge £50 for a bacteriological water sample including administration costs. There is no specific charge for a chemical sample. The new Private Water Supply Regulations 2009 have introduced specific sampling regimes for each supply and the test can include up to 50 parameters (for example turbidity, odour, coliforms, metals, and/or specific pesticides etc). The result is that most samples will be analysed for different parameters and the Analyst will charge individually for each of these. The cost for each sample will vary, hence the request to pass on total cost. The administration will remain reasonably constant, collecting the sample, paperwork and delivery to the Analyst, hence the request for a standard administration fee.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Each charging policy meets corporate and service objectives, these vary according to the service provided.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Charges are being recommended in line with the Council's charging policy as approved by the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee.

5.2 To raise charges towards recovering reasonable costs.

5.3 It is proposed to raise the fees for a member of the public to collect a stray dog from £35 to £50. It is recognised that this does not cover the full cost of the service to Melton Borough Council. It is proposed that this is the first of above inflation increases to bring the charge toward cost recovery.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 The law allows for us to recover reasonable costs.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no specific Community Safety implications relating to this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 These charges may affect those less able to pay, more so with regard to stray dog collection, but it is the responsibility of the dog owner to prevent their dog from straying. The other charges will primarily affect businesses. All charges are allowed in law and are there to enable some cost recovery.

8.2 An equalities impact assessment has been completed for the charging policy previously agreed by Policy, Finance and Admin Committee.

9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 If there is a higher cost of collecting a stray dog, it is possible that fewer will be collected. The Council are obliged to pay for the kennelling for the first seven days, therefore it is possible there may be an increased financial burden on the Council.

Probability
↓

Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D	1			
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Raising the Stray Dog fees may mean that fewer are collected which has a financial impact upon MBC

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 10.1 There are no specific climate change implications relating to this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 There has been no consultation on this matter.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 There is no affect on a particular ward

Contact Officer: Victoria Clarke
Date: 1st March 2011

Appendices : n/a

Background Papers: REEA 08/09/10 REVIEW OF CHARGES 2011-12
The Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992
The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009

Reference : X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\REEA\2010 11\080910