



# Proposed changes to boat licence fees

## Consultation responses

### 1. Introduction

Consultation on the council's proposed changes to boat licence fees took place between Monday 13 November 2023 and Monday 8 January 2024.

These proposals were consulted on alongside consultations on the council's draft budget proposals.

### 2. Consultation methodology

The following methods were used to seek views:

- written representations were welcomed, one was received.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- an article on the council's [newsroom site](#)
- posts on the council's social media channels
- multiple emails on behalf of Canterbury City Council to all relevant licence holders informing them of the consultation process
- a public notice was shared in the Kentish Gazette for a period of 2 weeks. .

### 3. Written representations

One written representations was received.

#### 3.1. A licence holder

A licence holder submitted the following comments via email:

*Please find below the response from Canterbury and Stour Waterways Association (CASWA) members (Grove Ferry River Trips, Westgate Punts, Canterbury Punting Company and Canterbury Historic River Tours) relating to the proposed variation to the table of fees for Commercial River Craft licences.*

*CASWA's members recognise the current challenging economic environment faced by all public bodies across the UK and the requirement of Canterbury City Council to increase the various annual fees it charges to enable it to provide services to its residents.*

*The current Commercial River Craft Policy and Licensing Conditions were negotiated between senior council officers and CASWA's members from September 2017 until at least the second half of 2018. The negotiation process, as acknowledged by all parties, was long and thorough, and the agreements reached were satisfactory to all involved. Appendix D of the existing licensing document states the following:*

*Appendix D:*

*The Council incurs costs in discharging its duties as the licensing authority. Following consultation with operators, it was agreed that they would prefer to be charged a single operating fee per annum rather than have this broken down to costs per item, boat person etc. and not to have a street trade licensing regime to cover marketing activity. Consequently each company will be charged an inclusive fee for an operators licence, set in consideration of the nature and size of the operation and associated sales and marketing activity.*

*The fee set is subject to the Council's annual greater budgeting exercise in terms of necessary inflationary related uplift.*

*CASWA's members believe that it is important to maintain the integrity of the existing fee structure. The proposed variation, published as a table of fees in the public notice dated 16 November 2023, bears no resemblance to the actual fees paid by each separate*

*CASWA member and fails to mention the fact that each CASWA member pays one single, all-encompassing fee as described above.*

*We believe that the table of fees published is misleading not only to members of the public but also, potentially, to both councillors and council officers, as it gives a distorted view as to the reality of the situation.*

*As stated in the quoted section from Appendix D above: 'The fee set is subject to the Council's annual greater budgeting exercise in terms of necessary inflationary related uplift.'*

*The current UK inflation rate is 3.9%, with the core CPIH annual inflation rate being 5.2% in November 2023. CASWA's members agreed to pay last year's 5% increase to their licence fees without complaint but feel that a further 10% increase in 2024 goes against the spirit of the agreement that was made when negotiating the existing licence in 2017-18.*

*CASWA's members believe that the current licence has, in the main, worked well for both the companies concerned and the council. There have been no disputes or divisive issues since the implementation of the licence in 2018 and we see no reason to alter the terms and conditions of the existing licence beyond annual inflationary-related increases.*

*We look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes, CASWA*

## 4. Conclusions

No conclusions to be drawn given the lack of response.