

## **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday, 15 March 2022 at 6.00 pm in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT**

**Present:** Councillors A R H England, M B Hosken, L A Murray, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes (Chair), J M Seymour, M J Smith, B J Thompson, C R Turley (Vice-Chair) and D Wright

**In Attendance:** R Attwell (Democracy Officer (Democracy)), S Fisher (Principal Licensing Officer), A Hunt (Public Protection Manager), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy) and Dean Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services)

**Apologies:** Councillor

#### **LIC11      Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **LIC12      Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cllr J Seymour asked for clarification in relation to the wording of the last minutes around “to no change to the make of Telford and Wrekin”. Officers confirmed that this would be investigated outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED-** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th October 2021 be approved and signed by the chair

#### **LIC13      Update of Licence Fees 2022/23**

The Public Protection Group Manager presented the report on the update of Licence Fees 2022/23. The licence fees and charges were normally reviewed annually, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic and although the licence fees has gone through a review process, it was the decision of the Council not to increase fees in order to support businesses.

Committee Member’s asked for clarification as to who were the “groups of people”, that would not be affected, as identified within the report, as it would affect licence holders. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed that related to the Community Impact Assessment and referred to protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act such as age, gender and race.

The review has been carried out in accordance with Government Guidance in relation to the setting fees with a proposed implementation date for the new level of fees of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. The report set out the financial and legal implications. Some fees had been reduced where licence processes had been

streamlined. However it was worth noting that only certain costs could be recovered owing to the legislative provisions. Licence fees for taxis, gambling and street trading that required a public consultation, and this had taken place over 28 days, from 2nd February to 1st March 2022. It was noted that no responses had been received.

The Public Protection Group Manager updated the Committee on the Appendices attached to the report which set out the majority of the fee changes in relation to all of the licensing fees charged by the Council, and the draft Mobile Homes fee and Charges Policy for the 2022-23 financial year. The Committee members asked why some Gambling licence fees were being reduced. The Public Protection Group Manager stated that the current fees for annual inspections were based on each type of premises. However, having carried out inspections during the last year it has been found that the time taken by officers to complete this process was the same for each type of premises. As a result, the fee has to be reduced because less officer time is spent carrying out inspections and the fees regime only allow fees to be set on a cost recovery basis.

Members queried what the licences for dangerous wild animals were for and expressed concern about whether these were the fees for the keeping of dangerous wild animals by members of the general public. The Public Protection Group Manager confirmed that these were the licence fees for pet shops who might wish to sell such exotic animals. The Council had invested in an officer who would train to achieve a BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Animal Inspectors, but if there was an animal that the Licensing Officer was not trained to inspect then it would require the attendance of an appropriate veterinary inspector which would incur a vet's fee. Members asked if the changes to dangerous wild animal licence fees was an increase or decrease. The Public Protection Group Manager confirmed that it is a net increase.

The Group Manager continued that Zoos required an annual inspection. The cost of these annual inspections had been separated out from the initial licence fee for two reasons. One because it allowed the cost to be spread over the life of the licence and two the vet's fee would vary according to how compliant the zoo was and therefore, depending on this factor inspection fees may vary from zoo to zoo. Recharge would then be at the actual rather than an average cost.

It was explained that the Mobile Homes fees have all increased. Committee Member's asked why the new application fee for Band B with 6-10 units has stayed the same. The Pubic Protection Group Manager responded that this was a typographical error and it should have stated £620, not £520.

Some Committee Member's enquired whether putting 1 to 5 mobile homes on a piece of private land was allowed and did it require a licence. The Public Protection Group Manager responded that yes it would be allowed and yes it would require a licence.

It was asked what determined the number of mobile home units and if there was a planning permission or certificate of lawful use on historic sites. Could the number of units be counted upon inspection? The Public Protection Group Manager stated that on some very old sites there was no planning permission, then asked if the Member's was happy for the question to be answered outside of the meeting. The Committee Member agreed.

Some Committee Members enquired if site owners were allowed to pass on changes in fees to site residents and how did the Council know they did not pass them on? The Public Protection Group Manager stated that site residents had to pay annual pitch fees to the site owner. It was not something which was part of the licence, but if a resident thought that the increase in pitch fee was not justified, they had recourse to the First Tier Tribunal.

**RESOLVED – that**

- A) The fee set out in the report were approved including the revised figure of £620 for Band B (6-10 units) for mobile homes; and**
- B) The revised fee's and policy take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.**

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** Monday, 10 October 2022