

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 6.00 pm in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors H Rhodes (Chair), A R H England, M B Hosken, S J Reynolds, J M Seymour, B J Thompson and D Wright

In Attendance: A Hunt (Public Protection Manager), S Fisher (Principal Licensing Officer), R Attwell (Democracy Officer (Democracy)) and S Hardwick (Lead Lawyer: Litigation & Regulatory)

Apologies: Councillor C R Turley and M J Smith

LIC20 Declarations of Interest

None.

LIC21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LIC22 Annual Licensing Report

The Public Protection Group Manager presented the Annual Licensing Report for the 2022/23 municipal year to the Committee. Members noted that this was the first Annual Licensing Report brought to the Licensing Committee. The report provided an overview of the activities and duties that the Licensing Team had been involved in throughout the municipal year.

There were 270 licensed vehicles operating as taxis within the Borough, with 150 of these being new licenses. During 2022/23, 54 complaints had been received, of which only 14 related to drivers licensed by Telford & Wrekin. Stickers containing a QR code had been installed in taxis, with the aim to raise awareness of the checks completed, as well as clarity regarding the complaints procedure. A review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy had been undertaken. A trial was underway for the use of CCTV in licensed vehicles in the Borough. The trial involved 20 units and a passenger survey was ongoing.

The Service had issued 18 new premise licenses, 181 temporary event notices and 42 personal licences since April 2022. A new initiative programme called “Licensing Safety and Vulnerability Initiative” (LSAVI) had been launched. The programme had been designed as a Self-assessment tool aimed at pubs and clubs, to support a safe and secure night time environment. The Enforcement Team had supported in the undertaking of

13 multi-agency operations. In addition, over 30 routine Night-Time Economy inspections had taken place in the last municipal year. During these inspections, the Night-Time Economy team had provided advice and support to licensees, completed checks on compliance with licence conditions, taxi vehicle and driver checks with compliance to conditions and monitoring and supporting the taxi marshal scheme.

The focus of the Licensing Team over the next 12 months was to promote and facilitate the Licensing Safety and Vulnerability Initiative, develop the CCTV and driver survey forms for taxis, continued participation in the 'Multi-Agency Targeted Enforcement Strategy' (MATES) operations and fulfilment of any statutory duties.

A discussion took place in relation to the CSE report, and the compliances that the Licensing Team have been required to achieve these objectives. Members requested that any CSE compliances from a Licensing perspective be added to any future annual reports.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the content of the annual report be noted and the areas of focus for 2023/24 be approved;**
- b) **the consolidated Information Sharing Policy detailed in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as contained in Appendix A of the report be approved.**

LIC23 Licensing Fees

The Public Protection Group Manager provided an update regarding changes to Licensing Fees. Fees had been amended to improve fairness and any increase had been due to the Local Authority attempting to recover the costs of administering licences from establishments such as taxi drivers/firms, gambling establishments, Metal and Animal Establishments.

Members raised concerns around how fee increases would impact licence holders and their businesses. Members were advised that the Council were required to consider the impact that any increase may have upon the livelihood of licence holders and the Licensing Team followed the Local Government Association guidance on locally set licence fees, to ensure a fair and transparent approach for businesses.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the fees, charges and policy set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report be approved;**
- b) **the approved fees, charges and policy take effect from 1st April 2023.**

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2023