



## **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**Present:** Councillors E Aston, A J Burford, P Davis, J Thompson (Chair), K T Tomlinson and R Tyrrell

**In Attendance:** Dean Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), A Hunt (Public Protection Group Manager), C Phillips (Commercial Development Manager), S Hardwick (Lead Lawyer: Litigation & Regulatory) and J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy))

**Apologies:** Councillor G C W Latham-Reynolds and L Parker

#### **LIC29      Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **LIC30      Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 21 November 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **LIC31      Licensing Fees Report 2024-2025**

The Public Protection Group Manager presented the Licensing Fees Report 2024-2025 which provided an updated on the current licensing fees, charges and policy and sought approval for the revised licensing fees and charges.

If Members were minded to approve the revised fees and charges, they would take effect from 1 April 2024.

A 28 day statutory consultation had taken place on the proposed fees for Taxi, Street Trading and Gambling between 2 January 2024 until 29 January 2024. No responses were received. Fees and charges had also been fully reviewed to reflect any changes in legislation, government guidance, changes to processes and compliance requirements, together with any increases in associated costs.

Scrap metal fees were included within the report for information only as these were reviewed and approved by Cabinet.



In January 2024, the Council introduced a pre-application service for new and renewing taxi licence applicants (both private and hackney carriages). Applicants were now able to book a face to face appointment with a licensing officer to get expert advice on submitting a valid and complete application. This came at an additional cost of £70 but provided an opportunity for drivers to ensure their application was complete and allowed prompt processing with a view to the applicant operating at the earliest opportunity.

During the debate some Members raised concerns regarding preventing or dissuading taxi drivers from applying locally for licences due to the increased fees, the rationale for the fees and whether they were dealt with on an individual basis, the jump in fees for Zoos, the hiring of horses, street trading and the transfer fee for mobile homes. Other Members were encouraged with the charges for enforcement notices in relation to recouping full costs for non-compliance.

The Public Protection Group Manager, together with the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services and the Commercial Development Manager reassured Members that in relation to taxi fees, benchmarking had taken place with neighbouring authorities. Vehicle numbers had increased by 33% and 21% of drivers had returned. All of the fees had been looked at on an individual basis with a deep dive into process and procedures in order to reflect the true cost. Changes to fees had taken place some had reduced or remained the same and where necessary increases had been put in place.

**RESOLVED – that:**

- a) the fees, charges and policy as set out in Appendices A, B and C to the report be approved;
- b) the revised fees and charges and policy be implemented from 1st April 2024; and
- c) the content of the report be noted and the pre-application service and associated fee for new and renewing taxi licence applicants be endorsed.

The meeting ended at 6.33 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** Date Not Specified