



LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Monday 29 July 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors J Thompson (Chair), S Handley (Vice-Chair), E Aston, A J Burford, H Rhodes, P J Scott and R Tyrrell

Also Present: Councillor R A Overton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement)

In Attendance: A Hunt (Public Protection Group Manager), Dean Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy), A Singh (Licensing & Night-Time Economy Manager) and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny))

Apologies: Councillor G C W Latham-Reynolds, L Parker and K T Tomlinson

LIC1 Declarations of Interest

None.

LIC2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 13 March 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LIC3 Terms of Reference 2024/25 - Licensing Committee

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the Terms of Reference report to the Licensing Committee. This was an annual report delegated by Full Council for each committee to approve their own Terms of Reference at the start of each municipal year. The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy noted that there was one minor error within the report and that there were no proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the 2024/2025 municipal year. Members were asked to agree the Terms of Reference as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED – that the Terms of Reference be approved.



LIC4 Annual Licensing Report

The Public Protection Group Manager presented the Annual Licensing Report, which provided an update on the current licensing fees, charges and policy and sought approval for the revised licensing fees and charges. This was the second Annual Licensing report that had been presented to the Committee and gave an update on the service area. The Council had a statutory duty to approve, review and monitor licences and publish policies in relation to certain licensing functions. The report, however, did not cover licences or permits relating to street works, skips or scaffolding, skin piercing, petroleum and fireworks or environmental permits.

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, there had been 834 applications received and 687 licences that were issued. This was an increase of 205 applications in comparison to 2022/23, which equated to a 20% increase. The Public Protection Group Manager highlighted that there were 392 vehicles being licenced as a private hire vehicle, which was a 33% increase from the previous year. The report outlined that there were 46 complaints that were currently being investigated.

Members were informed that in November 2023 a report had been presented regarding CCTV within taxis across the Borough. A joint agreement between, Wolverhampton, Shropshire and Staffordshire Councils together with Telford & Wrekin Council maintained a clear approach to taxi licence regulation.

The Public Protection Group Manager informed the Committee that there had been 20 new premises licences granted, which was an increase of 40% compared to 2022/23. She highlighted the multi-agency Licensing Safety and Vulnerability initiative (LSAVI), which promoted safety amongst night-time economy venues. There were 70 premises that were accredited under LSAVI. The initiative provided training and support for premises to ensure that their clients were safe on site.

The report discussed 43 annual licensing activities including inspections, which was an increase of 10 from previous years. Looking to 2024/25 the Public Protection Group Manager highlighted that the team would be reviewing current policies and in particular the gambling policy which was currently out to consultation and would be presented to the Committee in due course.

During the debate, some Members raised a concerns relating to the continuing funding of CCTV in private hire vehicles and if there were any alternative sources of funding.



The Public Protection Group Manager explained that the team was working with partner agencies such as the Police to support further funding but there were currently no other funding opportunities available from the Government.

Members asked about the process of prosecution of scrap metal collectors that were operating on a licence out of the Borough and it was explained that this would be a police matter to prosecute and that they would refer the matter to them. There were comments on temporary event notices which are licences for one-off events and asked why the process seemed so complicated. It was explained that this was prescribed by Central Government and there was agreement that the process could seem complicated. Members were generally pleased with the CCTV initiative as well as the LSAVI approach for pubs and clubs that was supported by the team. A point of clarification was asked about how a fine was set by the courts and who receives the money if a licence holder was prosecuted. The Public Protection Group Manager explained that it was the Magistrates Court which issued fines and the fine is collected by the courts. The local authority ask for costs towards the prosecution

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED: that the content of the Annual Licensing Report and that the areas of focus for 2024/25 would be approved and noted.

LIC5 Pavement Licence Fees

The Public Protection Group Manager presented the revised Licensing Fees report to the Committee. The revised fees were introduced by the Government on the 31 March 2023 which enabled Local Authorities to recover their costs associated with administering and managing such licences. It was noted that the fee for a pavement licence was capped at £500 for new applications and £350 for renewals. Once approved a pavement licence would be granted for a two-year period. The pavement licence was introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the Government's scheme to support hospitality businesses. The fees were not set to make a profit, but to recoup the costs of administering the licence. The report asked Members to approve the revised fees set at £400 for new applications and £250 for renewed licences.

During the debate, some Members were pleased with the report and the proposed fees which helped to recover the council's costs as well as supporting businesses in local high streets and town centres.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED that:



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- a) the proposed pavement licence fees be approved; and**
- b) that the revised fees would take effect from 1 August 2024.**

The meeting ended at 6.37 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday 3 October 2024