



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday, 10th October 2018 at 9:57am.

P R E S E N T

Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Stuart Smith

O T H E R S

Stewart Broome – Senior Licensing Officer
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

23. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that, due to the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, it was recommended that a Member be elected as Chairman for this meeting. Councillor Julia Huffer was duly proposed and seconded. There being no other nominations, Councillor Julia Huffer was elected to act as Chairman for this meeting.

24. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Allan, Sue Austen, Elaine Griffin-Singh and Chris Morris and also from Liz Knox, the Environmental Services Manager.

25. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared.

26. **MINUTES**

Councillor Julia Huffer noted two occasions where her first name had been spelling incorrectly and these were amended.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 12th September 2018, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

27. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

28. **REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES**

The Committee considered a report, T119 previously circulated, that set out the statutory fees which the Council was required to charge for specific licences and the fees for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that the report set out the statutory fees to be charged during 2019-2020. With the exception of these fees, the Council could set its own fees providing legislative requirements were followed. This was the third time the fees had been reviewed and any suggested charges could be challenged. Therefore the fee levels had to be proportionate to the work involved and to ensure that no profits were made. The different revenue streams had been analysed to assess the correct level of relevant fees. The Committee was reminded that the fee levels would be brought up to the appropriate levels over the long-term and this process was around half-way through.

The table on page 4 of the report showed the increases in income and expenditure over the past three years and the percentage of costs recovered. The target was 85% cost recovery with last year showing an increased 75% recovery level. The Licensing department had looked at ways to reduce its costs, including challenging the internal costs charged to it. There was a potential central internal expenditure increase expected which would affect those numbers.

Systems had been implemented to gauge the actual costs involved with each licencing activity. This was analysed and suggested that costs were being recovered via the relevant fee levels, though this year had been difficult to assess this, due to a number of one-off projects which had incurred additional costs. This included implementing the new animal welfare requirements and the time spent working on the taxi policy and the taxi fare review. Despite these factors, the figures indicated that driver licence income was still significantly lower than the costs of providing the service, so it was recommended that these fees should be increased by £25. There was no legislative requirement to consult on that fee rise.

Appendix 4 showed the discretionary fees for general licences, with the proposed fees for 2019/20 and the difference from the previous fees. Most fees would remain the same with a few increased. The income from Street Trading fees were covering costs, so there was no justification in proposing any increases. It was proposed that only taxi driver licences be increased due to the current significant deficit.

Overall things were going well and the cost/income gap was being bridged. Things could alter if further legislative changes were made. If this became the case then the fee levels would have to be reviewed again in an effort to find a balance. Hopefully everything would have settled down over the next twelve months, when a further comprehensive review could be undertaken.

Councillor Alan Sharp congratulated the Senior Licensing Officer on getting to the current position regarding costs and income. There was one minor query relating to the £125 income from zoos. The Senior Licensing Officer explained that there was one establishment at Stretham that fell into the category of a zoo. Its primary function was to visit schools to educate them about a number of animals. As it had an establishment it fell into the relevant category and had incurred a fee of £500, which had been paid in instalments over four years.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the statutory fees that East Cambridgeshire District Council was required to charge in respect of the specified licences under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 as set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, be noted and that these fees (or if subject to statutory amendment, the relevant amended fees) be implemented on the 1 April 2019.
- (ii) That Officers be instructed to implement, as appropriate, any other statutory fees that may be brought into force during the 2018/19 financial year.
- (iii) That Officers be instructed to include the agreed fees in the 2019/20 annual fees and charges report that is presented to full Council.
- (iv) That, with any necessary modification, the proposed fees relevant to those licences and licensing related activities where the authority has the discretion to determine the fees, as set out in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4, on the 1 April 2019, be implemented.
- (v) That, with any necessary modification, the proposed fees relevant to scrap metal licences, as set out in Appendix 4, with an understanding that if Council do not approve the measure, refunds will be given, be implemented immediately.
- (vi) That the inclusion of the new Animal Welfare licence fees, which were agreed by Members on Wednesday 12 September 2018 to come into effect on 1 October 2018 in order to comply with the new animal welfare legislation be noted.
- (vii) That Officers be instructed to include the fees in the 2019/20 annual fees and charges report that is presented to full Council.
- (viii) That, with any necessary modification, the proposed fees relevant to driver licences, as set out in Appendix 5, with an understanding that if Council do not approve the measure, refunds will be given be implemented immediately.
- (ix) That the proposed fees relevant to hackney carriage vehicle, private hire vehicle and operator licences, as set out in Appendix 5 be implemented.

- (x) That Officers be instructed to include the proposed fees, as set out in Appendix 5, in the 2018/19 annual fees and charges report that is presented to full Council.

29. **LICENSING OFFICERS REPORT**

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that all procedures and necessary processes were in place, all licence renewals had been set out to ensure there would be no gaps in trade, and everybody affected had been spoken to. This had resulted in no complaints being received about the new fee increases. There had been one occasion where a licence holder had two different licences expiring at different times, so they had been contacted to arrange the two licences to be merged as from January. The last of the items on the priority list were nearing completion and the necessary inspections would be commencing shortly. The taxi meters had been re-calibrated to handle the new fare charges and this had been completed at an event at the Leisure Centre car park. During 2017/18 788 licence applications had been dealt with and currently this year 801 had been processed.

30. **LICENSING COMMITTEE FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee noted its forward agenda plan. The Senior Licensing Officer queried the need for either of the November and December scheduled meetings due to the workload of the Department. Confirmation would be given to the Democratic Services Officer whether those meetings would be required.

31. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of item 9 because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

32. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 12th September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

The meeting closed at 10:07.