

Item 4

Time began: 6.00pm

Time ended: 6.20pm

LICENSING COMMITTEE

25 January 2024

Present Councillor A Holmes (Chair)
 Councillors

In attendance Councillors Chambers, Evans, Kaur, Kozlowski, Lakin, Lindsey,
 Rawson, Potter, Wilson & J Wright
 Angela Rawson - Service Manager - Licensing
 Syma Ahktar – Solicitor

14/23 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hudson, Smale and Sandhu

15/23 Late Items

There were no late items.

16/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

18/23 General Licensing Fees and Charges 2024/25

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Public Protection & Streetpride asking them to consider the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in the attached appendices. The Service Manager – Licensing presented the report to the Committee. Appendix 1 set out the proposed fees and charges for licences, registrations and permits. These were based on a cost recovery only basis and Committee were informed that, due to internal savings, it had been possible to keep the increase to a minimum. Appendix 2 detailed the proposed fees chargeable under the Gambling Act 2005. These fees were also based on a cost recovery basis, some fees set by statute and it had also been possible to keep these charges to a minimum. Appendix 3 set out all the fees, chargeable under the Licensing Act 2003, which were set in statute and no amendments could be made to these.

Resolved

- 1. To approve the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.**
- 2. To note the statutory fees and charges made under the Licensing Act 2003 set out at Appendix 3.**

19/23 Taxi Licensing Fees and Charges 2024/25

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Public Protection & Streetpride asking them to consider the proposed licence fees and charges for driver, vehicle and operator licences for 2024/25 as set out in the attached appendices. The Service Manager – Licensing presented the report to the Committee, informing them that, under Sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 there is provision for the Local Authority to charge fees it considers reasonable to cover the cost of issuing and administering licenses, as well as those for vehicle inspections and administration costs. These are reviewed annually and are non-profit making. The Service Manager confirmed that separate accounts had to be kept for each type of licence issued and unfortunately these costs had to be increased as the cost of maintaining the service had increased.

Committee were informed that the Council is required to publish the proposed changes to the driver, vehicle and operator charges in the local newspaper and any objections or representations lodged within 28 days of the publication must be considered by the Council. Any matters arising may be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Licensing Committee.

Committee noted that whilst some fees, such as DBS checks, had reduced, there were some considerable increases, up to 20%, and queried whether this was warranted. The Service Manager – Licensing confirmed that some costs had gone down as they had been able to source cheaper resources, but unfortunately other fees had had to be increased. It was reiterated that Licensing was non-profit making and that any increases in fees made had been done purely for cost recovery.

Concerns were raised as to whether the increased costs could force license holders, in particular, taxi license holders, to leave the local authority and get licensed elsewhere. The Service Manager – Licensing stated that the increases had been kept as low as possible, but there was still going to be a full internal review as to how to make savings and make processes more streamlined, adding that Derby City Council's rates were competitive with other City Council's rates, stating that they had lost numbers, but so had other Councils.

It was questioned why a lot of taxi drivers and vehicles were licensed in Wolverhampton and discussion was held on how Wolverhampton managed to keep

their fees low. The Service Manage – Licensing confirmed that they were hoping to adopt some of these processes during their internal review and hoped to be able to reduce costs in the future.

Resolved

- 1. To approve, subject to the consideration of representations, the proposed licence fees and charges for driver, vehicle and operator licences and other charges for 2024/25 as set out at Appendix 1.**
- 2. To request the Service Director of Public Protection and Streetpride to advertise the proposed fees and charges.**
- 3. delegate to the Service Director of Public Protection and Streetpride following consultation with the Chair, to consider any representations received within the required period and to take appropriate action if required to address such representations.**
- 4. approve the new licence fees and charges to become effective from 1 April 2024, subject to there not being any representations received during the required period, or where any such representations have been considered.**

MINUTES END