

LICENSING COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Wednesday
12th March 2014 at 6.00 pm at the Business Development Centre, Stafford Park,
Telford, TF3 3BA**

PRESENT

Councillors C Mason (Chair), A Mackenzie, R. Scammell, J Seymour, M Smith, J Thompson and C Turley

Officers in attendance: L Noakes (Assistant Director: Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection), S Fisher (Principal Licensing Officer), M Cumberbatch (Legal Services Manager), K. Fisher (Legal Services Team Leader) and P Smith (Democratic Services Team Leader)

LC-14 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 14th January 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LC-15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors T Hope, R Sloan and K Tomlinson

LC-16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC-17 LICENCE FEES

The Principal Licensing Officer presented the report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection, which detailed the proposed level of fees and charges for 2014/15 for Hackney Carriages, the Private Hire trade, Gambling and General Licences.

The current level of licence fees was implemented by the Licensing Authority on 1 May 2013 following discussions with the taxi trade and a review of administrative processes. The level of fees set projected a budget shortfall on £178.7k against the number of licences. Since then, there had been a restructure within Public Protection, which had delivered savings to address the shortfall against income targets. It was also anticipated that, as a result of a reduction in fees in 2013, service improvements and revised hackney carriage and private hire conditions, some drivers and operators would be encouraged to return to be licensed locally rather than by a neighbouring council.

The annual review of licensing fees had taken into account the above factors, and in particular the need for the changes to “bed down” and take effect. It was therefore proposed that the licence fees be retained at their current level for the forthcoming financial year. A further review of licence fees would be undertaken at the end of

2014 when a fuller picture could be seen of the effect of the changes on the cost of administering the licensing service against income received. It was anticipated that income targets for 2014/15 would be achieved. A Community Impact Assessment had been carried out, and was appended to the report.

In order to allow time for consultation with licensees, it was advised that the date for implementation shown in the recommendation in the report be amended from 1st April to 1st May 2014.

During the ensuing debate, reference was made as to whether the projected income from licence fees would cover the costs of the service. The Principal Licensing Officer advised that, as a result of the savings made over the last 12 months, it was hoped that this would be the outcome, although the final year-end figures would not be known for a few weeks yet. The Principal Licensing Officer was asked why there were no fees listed for scrap metal dealers and for day licences for street trading, to which she responded that the new licences for scrap metal dealers had been introduced in October 2013, and the fees had been set at that time. In relation to street trading, the changes to the policy and conditions were still subject to consultation, but that the proposed licence fees had been approved in principle by the Committee at the last meeting.

RESOLVED - that the level of proposed fees, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved to come into force on 1 May 2014, subject to any consultation responses received. If there are any significant comments made as a result of the consultation, the matter will be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Chairman:

Dated: