

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 5 February 2020 at 7.00 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Qaisar Abbas (Vice-Chair), Chris Baker, Tony Fish, Steve Liddiard, Fraser Massey, David Potter, Shane Ralph, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Sue Shinnick, David Van Day and Abbie Akinbohun (substitute for Alex Anderson)

**Apologies:** Councillors Alex Anderson and Ben Maney

**In attendance:** Paul Adams, Principal Licensing Officer  
Lois Bland, Legal Representative (left at 7.10pm)  
Simon Scrowther, Legal Representative(left at 7.10pm)  
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **12. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 13 March 2019 were approved as a true and correct record.

The Chair of the Committee enquired as to the licensing responsibilities of the Council in relation to Street Preachers. The Legal Representative explained from a licensing perspective there was no responsibility on the Licensing department.

During discussions the Legal Representative advised if Members were aware of street preachers who were causing a nuisance or annoyance then this could be looked into by the Council.

Councillor Collins then sought an update following the last meeting of the Committee, where the Principal Licensing Officer highlighted:

In relation to Animal Welfare there were now 47 premises within the borough. Licensing Officers were still investigating premises around the borough, with two premises currently being proposed for enforcement action.

Uber operating within Thurrock, were doing so on their London operating licence. Members heard that this was lawful and Uber could continue to operate, even while they were appealing the decision from Transport for London to refuse their recent application.

CCTV within taxis was part of a Transport for London consultation and Officers were awaiting for guidance from the Department for Transport, which would be presented to the Committee once it had been published.

### **13. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **14. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **15. Applications Received**

The Principal Licensing Officer presented the report which provided the Committee with a summary of applications received under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 for the period of 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Members heard that under the Licensing Act 2003 or the Gambling Act 2005 an application for a New/Variation/Minor Variation for a Premises Licence or Club Premises Certificate would be granted under officer delegation unless there was relevant representation received, from either a Responsible Authority or from Other Persons (Interested Party). It was further explained where a representation was made the application would be referred to the Licensing Sub Committee for determination, the same was for Temporary Event Notices.

Officers continued to advise of the details of all applications received for any New, Variation, Minor Variation for a Premises Licence/Club Premises Certificate or a Temporary Event Notice; or any type of Gambling Premises Licence for the period of the 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

The Committee were further advised there had been no appeals to any decisions made during this period.

Members enquired as to whether Licensing Officers attended big events, to ensure that the number of people proposed to attend, were the number of which was allowed entry. The Principal Licensing Officer commented that Officers would only attend such events if there was a clear need for them to be there.

The Principal Licensing Officer further explained there was the Safety Advisory Group, consisting of the Police, Highways and Licensing Officers, who reviewed event management plans for applications. It was remarked that all event applications had a high level of scrutiny by the Safety Advisory Group, including Health and Safety Officers.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Licensing Committee noted the contents of the report.**

**16. Setting of Licensing Fees**

The Principal Licensing Officer introduced the report and in doing so, highlighted the process and methodology for the setting of Licence Fees associated with licence applications under the remit of the Licensing Committee, and proposed the licencing fees for consultation where necessary for the 2020-2021 financial year.

Councillor Potter remarked that he felt it was unfair to increase taxi vehicles by 29% for vehicles with wheelchair access. The Principal Licensing Officer offered clarity that the increase in fees, could not be transferred on to the users, as this was unlawful.

Councillor Liddiard enquired if Officers felt the increase in Hackney Carriage fees was justified given the competition from Uber. Officers accepted that it was difficult for the local taxi trade. He continued to advice there had not been an increase in fees for 5 years.

The Principal Licensing Officer remarked that the fee increases were set on a cost recovery basis and was therefore necessary to enable services to continue to be offered.

During discussions it was queries as to whether the fees had been compared to other Local Authorities in the area. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed that benchmarking had taken place as it assisted to work out the increase percentage in fees. He explained that different Authorities could not be compared as there was a difference in the amount of licensing applications.

Councillor Abbas commented that he was against the high percentage increase in fees and felt that fees should be increased by 10% not 20/29%. It was discussed that Officers would be going to consultation with the local taxi trade over the increase in fees and would report back to the Committee once the consulted had been completed.

It was suggested that Members agree to amendment recommendation 1 so that the increase in fees was lower at the suggested 10%. Being put to the vote, it was agreed to keep the recommendation as it was within the report.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The Licensing Committee agreed the review of all current locally set licence fees under the delegated authority of the Licensing Committee and where there is a significant proposed increase or decrease to any fee, and the changes be consulted with local**

**stakeholders relevant to that licence and in accordance with any legislative requirements.**

- 2. Officers reported any relevant responses to the Licensing Committee following consultation for consideration.**

**The meeting finished at 8.15 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

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