

**Minutes of the Licensing and Safety Committee  
Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2022 at 6.00 pm  
In Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

**Present:**

Councillor E Taylor (Chair)  
Councillor J Clinton (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors R Burston, J Cowell, P Drake, M Evans, K Finch, P Miller, K Razzaq and A Taylor.

**Officers:**

S Smith - Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) (Directorate of Public Realm);  
R Clark – Solicitor, I Grosvenor – Finance Manager, R Hinett – Principal Accountancy  
Assistant and H Mills – Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Finance and Legal).

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9 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Elcock and A Millward.

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10 **Declarations of interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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11 **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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## 12 Revision of Licence Fees

A report of the Acting Director of Public Realm was submitted to consider the revision of fees for licences and consents, other than those where the fees were imposed by statute in respect of liquor licensing, gambling machine permits and lotteries and amusements.

In referring to paragraph 10 of the report, the Finance Manager advised that there had been a minor amendment to the figures printed, following a realignment of printing charges. The cost of licence administration should read £729,700, with the Net (surplus) of Licensing Administration equating to £92,100.

The Finance Manager provided a breakdown as to how the cost of licensing administration was formulated and outlined the reasons as to why this had increased by £20,600 from the previous financial year, which was reportedly due to the assumptions of a 1.75% pay increase for 2021/22 and a 2% pay increase for 2022/23, as well as an increase in National Insurance contributions.

The Committee were advised that 77% of the cost of licensing attributed to the administration of Hackney Carriage Licences and the remaining 23% for all other licensing functions. It was confirmed that the projected budget had been calculated with the assumption that there would be no increase to fees and charges for 2022/23 as budget income received from liquor licensing, gambling, street trading and all other licensable activities relevant to this Committee, were largely set at statutory prices. Therefore, an increase of 1 or 2% would have minimal impact to the prices in which the Authority could influence.

Arising from the presentation of the report, Members asked questions, made comments and responses were provided as follows:-

- The Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) confirmed that the Licensing Team was responsible for both issuing Liquor and Gambling licences, as well as Taxis licences, though the revision of fees for Taxis and Hackney Carriages would be considered at the next meeting of the Taxis Committee. It was further stated that a profit could not be made from the issue of Hackney Carriage licences, only the cost for administering the service could be recovered.
- In accordance with legislation the costs paid for an application, that was subsequently withdrawn or refused, were refunded back to the applicant, irrelevant of the costs incurred by the Local Authority, whilst dealing with the application.
- Though previously indicated, the fees set by the Secretary of State had not been increased since 2007. Local Authority's continued to lobby Central Government with regard to a review of fees.

- Should the Committee be minded to increase the fees by 1% this would equate to £142 increase in surplus or £284 if a 2% increase was approved.

Members were mindful of the current financial climate and the challenges businesses continued to experience as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, though also aware of the cost in carrying out the regulatory function.

### **Resolved**

That no action be taken to increase the fees for licences and consents, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, other than those where the fees are imposed by statute in respect of liquor licensing, gambling machine permits and amusements.

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The meeting ended at 6.25 pm.

CHAIR

