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LICENSING COMMITTEE

10 December 2021 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillors Blanchard-Cooper (Chairman), Cooper (Vice-Chair), Clayden, Gregory and Worne

516. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence had been received from Councillors Hamilton, Kelly, Northeast, Oliver-Redgate and Staniforth.

517. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

518. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2021 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

519. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items.

520. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that there had been no questions from the public submitted for this meeting.

521. MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meetings held on 24 September 2021 and 3 December 2021 were received and noted by the Committee.

Councillor Clayden as Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee on 3 December 2021 wished the Committee to note the request made by the Sub-Committee in Minute 13 – for all applications for hackney carriage/private hire driver licences, that the application form and references from other local authorities where an applicant had been or was a taxi driver be provided as part of the report to avoid delays in the future.

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522. LICENSING FEE SETTING

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Licensing Manager presented the report which set out proposed licence fees for specified licensing regimes to take effect on 1 April 2022. She highlighted in the appendices of the report the list of proposed fees alongside the current costs levied, and explained that the changes were limited as although costs had gone up, efficiencies had been made to ways of working with some processes have being streamlined and the benefit of this being passed forward to customers with fees set on a cost recovery basis.

Members then took part in a debate on the item where clarification over the meaning of the 'exhibition of animals' was sought. The Vice-Chair thanked Officers for the amount of time and effort involved in this detailed piece of work.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the licensing fees set out in appendix 1 be approved, to be effective from 1 April 2022.

523. TAXI FARES

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Licensing Officer presented the report which provided information to be considered for the annual review and setting of the Hackney Carriages (Taxis) fares charged to customers for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. He highlighted that there had been a limited and mixed response to the consultation with some for a rise, although without suggesting specific amounts, and some against a rise.

Members then took part in a full debate on the item where a number of points were raised including:

- fares set on a cost recovery basis
- only 11% response rate to the consultation and the implication that fares were at an appropriate level
- the difficulties of the current market for taxi drivers and the reduction in trade due to the pandemic, and support for no increase to the fares
- the cost of meter recalibration

The Licensing Manager and the Licensing Officer provided Members with responses to all points raised during the debate. It was highlighted that only 42 of 265 drivers had taken advantage of previous fare increases and had their meters recalibrated which meant that most were not currently charging up to the maximum fare possible, and that there was a policy in place for fare charge increases if a particular fuel price was reached.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - that

1. The fare structure of no increase for 2022/23 be agreed, as advertised. The fare structure shall come into effect 1 April 2022.
2. The approval of taxi fares be delegated to the Licensing Committee.

524. STREET TRADING DESIGNATIONS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Licensing Manager presented the report which asked that a recommendation be made to Full Council that an intention be made to pass a resolution to vary Street Trading Designations as set out in the appendices of the report. This intention would be made by agreeing to the advertising of the proposed Designations attached to the report. The report also sought delegation of Street Trading matters to the Licensing Committee. It was explained that the experience of the pandemic had highlighted that the current provision was outdated and required review, and that this provided an opportunity to proactively support business and regeneration across the District.

Members then took part in a full debate on the item where a number of points were raised including:

- clarification was sought on what consultation had been done
- the impacts of possible street trading on the smaller towns and villages of the District
- an opportunity to support expanding businesses and start-ups who were exploring different ways of doing things, and the benefit of this to the area

The Licensing Manager provided Members with responses to all points raised during the debate. She highlighted that the report was only looking at street designations and provided a proactive way to invite applications, and that the policy to implement these designations would come back to Committee at a later stage.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - that

1. An intention to pass a resolution to vary Street Trading Designations as set out in the appendices of this paper be made. This intention is made by agreeing to the advertising of the proposed Designations attached to this paper

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2. Future matters relating to Street Trading Designations, Policy and Fees be delegated to the Licensing Committee.

525. STATEMENT OF GAMBLING LICENSING PRINCIPLES 2022-2025

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Licensing Officer presented the report which required the Committee as Arun's Licensing Authority, before each successive period of three years, to prepare and publish a statement of principles they proposed to apply in exercising their functions under the Gambling Act 2005. There were no changes proposed.

The recommendation was then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the proposed Statement of Gambling Principles 2022-2025 without change be adopted.

526. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 10.07 am)