

Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 14 December 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Daniel Chukwu, Aaron Green, Vikki Hartstean, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji and Kairen Raper

Apologies: Councillors Ben Maney, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Graham Snell and James Thandi

In attendance:
Paul Adams, Principal Licensing Officer
Lois Bland, Legal Support Officer
Luke Tucker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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.

10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

11. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Setting of Licensing Fees 2024/2025 - To Follow

The Licensing Manager presented the report to the Licensing Committee.

During questions from Members the following was highlighted:

- Councillor Kent asked which fees does the Local Authority have discretion over and which ones are set by legislation.
 - The Local Authority has discretion over taxi, private hire, animal establishments and street trading the.
 - Licensing Act and Gambling Act are statutory set.
- Councillor Kent asked if the Local Authority is making a full cost recovery on statutory fees.
 - The Local Authority can't recover full costs for Licensing Act 2003 applications.
 - Reliant on the government changing legislation so fees can be set locally.

- Councillor Kent wanted an explanation how the Local Authority can't make a profit, but some accounts show a surplus.
 - The Local Authority is allowed to roll the surplus and deficit forward. Accounts may show a surplus, but the Local Authority is reducing its deficit from previous years.
 - By reviewing fees annually, the Local Authority can keep an eye on its deficits and surpluses.
- Councillor Green sought confirmation for the date proposed for the fee increase.
 - 1st April 2024
- Councillor Green asked if the Local Authority had looked at neighbouring authorities to see if there is a way to increase licence holder numbers.
 - It's difficult to increase the number of licences for bars and restaurants as it is linked to economic growth.
 - Nationally there has been a reduction in taxi licences after the pandemic.
 - The cost of the licence isn't an issue but the ease of access to the licence.
- Councillor Hartstean asked if CRB is DBS on the cost centre and sort an explanation of figures of private hire and hackney driver.
 - Yes, CRB is DBS
 - Expense for DBS checks for the drivers and is a split on the recharge base.
- Councillor Hartstean asked if the Local Authority recoups the cost.
 - Yes, it is charged as part of the licence fee.
- Councillor Hartstean asked for an explanation of acronyms BCC income PP management.
 - BCC income – shared licencing management with Brentwood Council
 - PP management – Public Protection Management.
- Councillor Ononaji asked what could be done to reduce deficits.
 - Increase fees.
 - Difficult to incentivise.
- Councillor Raper said it may be useful to have a glossary of acronyms.
- Councillor Raper asked if there is a large implication of costs/manhours if changes are made to fees.
 - Update form and website, not a lot of work would be created.
- Councillor Raper asked gaming machine permits were per machine or per premise.
 - Per premise
- Councillor Chukwu referring to benchmarking figures of other authorities noted the Local Authority's fees are reasonable. Councillor Chukwu asked will an increase in fees be affordable to the people of Thurrock.
 - No fee increase appears to be cost prohibitive.
- Councillor Chukwu asked if the Local Authority intends to consult on fee increase.
 - The Local Authority will notify a soon as fees are approved.
- Councillor Green asked is there any way to recover DBS fees.

- Yes, there is a charge for DBS.
- The Local Authority occasionally requests additional DBS checks creating a slight deficit.
- Councillor Liddiard asked when did the Local Authority last raise fees across the board.
 - Most fees raised last year.

The Chair put the recommendation to vote.

For (9): Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Daniel Chukwu, Aaron Green, Vikki Hartstean, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji, and Kairen Raper

Against (0)

Abstained (0)

RESOLVED: That the Licensing Committee agree the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix B for the 2024- 2025 financial year.

The recording of the meeting can be viewed from the following link:
[Licencing Committee - 14th December 2023 at 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 7.31 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**