

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 March 2025 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cllr D A Flagg – Chairman

Cllr A Keddie – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr M Dower, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr M Howell,
Cllr J Richardson and Cllr L Williams

Present on Cllr Harman
MS Teams:

29. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Filer, Hilliard, Matthews, Northover and Sidaway.

30. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

31. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

32. Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Licencing Committee held on 12 December 2024 and the Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committees held on 26 November, 9, 11 and 23 December 2024, 22 January and 19 February 2025 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:

Licensing Committee 12 December 2024 – Minute 20 ‘Apologies’ – amend ‘Farquar’ to ‘Farquhar’.

33. Public Issues

The following Public Question was received by Susan Stockwell on Agenda Item 6, Licensing Fees and Charges for 2025-26. The Chair invited Susan Stockwell to read out her question.

“Could fees set for taxi licensing please cover enforcement at the taxi ranks by CSAS or other officers to ensure that drivers not licensed by BCP are neither using taxi ranks nor touting as well as a contribution to enforcement against cars parked in taxi ranks, to cover all hours when the nighttime

economy is operating at appropriate locations. Taxis are such an important contribution to public safety and our nighttime economy that I feel very strongly that they should be supported accordingly.

Could fees set for sex establishment licensing please cover the substantial expense of monitoring all of the frequent changes of window displays and a boards at sex shops and of monitoring the strip clubs for compliance with conditions, in particular the no touching rule and the requirement premises are kept in good condition.”

The following response was read out by the Chair:

“A Local Authority sets licensing fees that are not governed by statute (so all licensing fees, bar those related to Licensing Act and Gambling Act applications) to enable them to recover their reasonable and proportionate costs of carrying out its licensing functions under the relevant regime. The costs of compliance monitoring and enforcement against an applicant who has been given a licence does fall within the costs of the Council's authorisation procedures, but the costs of enforcement activity against those not licensed (such as unlicensed drivers using ranks) cannot be recovered through the fee process, as the fees set for licences must not exceed the costs of administering the process. They are limited to cost recovery.

The CSAS Officer role is around managing anti-social behaviour, and these Officers do not have the capacity to support rank enforcement.

The current fee model is based on the corporate uplift to fees to cover inflation and national insurance charges and a full fee review will take place within 25/26.”

A discussion ensued around the Council's responsibilities to taxi drivers, and the Chair asked that an item be added to the Forward Plan to advise Committee on the Council's legal responsibilities towards Taxi Drivers and the services that the Council must deliver in this area.

34. Licensing fees and charges for 2025-2026

The Senior Licencing Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The purpose of this report was to establish the licensing fees and charges that should apply from 1 April 2025 for those licensing activities where the Council had discretion to do so.

The statutory principle in relation to the setting of fees is that they should be reasonable and should relate to the costs of performing the function, including staffing, administration, testing, inspections, hearings, regulation and appeals.

Inflationary increases to staff salaries meant that costs to provide the service had increased. A 5% uplift in fees had been applied to reflect these increased salary costs.

The fee regimes under review were as follows:

- Scrap Metal Dealers
- Pleasure Boats
- Sexual Establishments
- Taxi and Private Hire

The Senior Licensing Officer referred to an error in paragraph 23 of the report, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers numbers for 2023, which should read 1277 and not 12,777. It was also reported that the responsibility for setting scrap metal fees fell to Cabinet and, as such, the Committee's recommendation for setting scrap metal fees would be sent to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

In response to various questions raised by members of the Committee, the Senior Licensing Officer advised that legislation allowed for Local Authorities (LAs) to charge full cost recovery on the fee regimes stated. Fees must be proportionate and not over burdensome on the fee payer or taxpayer, and that is why neighbouring LAs charged different fees.

The Legal Advisor explained that once Taxi and Private Hire fees were agreed they would be published by the Council and vehicle owners and operators would have an opportunity to comment.

The Committee considered the fee regimes as set out in Appendix 1, which reflected an increase of 5%, calculated to reflect the staff pay award and changes to National Insurance.

RESOLVED that Members agree the proposed fees as stated; and that the decision agreed in respect to Scrap Metal Fees be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

35. Forward Plan

The Senior Licensing Officer took members through the Forward Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The following updates were provided:

- Pleasure Boats and Boatperson Licensing Policy – The draft policy would now be reconsidered by the Licensing Committee on 14 May 2025 following its postponement.
- Review of Statement of Licensing Policy – The final Policy would be presented to the Licensing Committee for approval on 14 May 2025

for adoption by Full Council on 3 June 2025. There had been an extended consultation due to the lack of engagement from the trade and therefore the Council had reached out to the trade for a second time to seek their views.

- Review of Statement of Licensing Principles – Gambling Act 2005 –. A full review of the policy was still planned to take place in 2025, with full public consultation, however, the Gambling Commission had still not released the necessary guidance.
- Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Vehicle and Operator Policies – The Licensing Committee would consider the responses to the public consultation on the draft policies on 18 September 2025.

Committee Briefings and Training Sessions 2025

Members of the Committee were asked to contact the Clerk should they have any future training requirements or areas which they would like more information on.

RESOLVED that

- i. the review of non-statutory set licensing fees be removed from the Forward Plan as this item had now been considered, and;**
- ii. the following item be added to the Forward Plan: - Committee members to be advised on the Council's legal responsibilities towards Taxi Drivers and the services that the Council must deliver in this area.**

The meeting ended at 10.33 am

CHAIRMAN