

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cllr J J Butt – Chair

Cllr T Johnson – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr S C Anderson, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr B Dion,  
Cllr D Farr, Cllr D A Flagg, Cllr M Howell, Cllr D Kelsey and  
Cllr L Williams

47. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr J Bagwell, Cllr N Decent and Cllr G Farquhar

48. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members for this meeting.

49. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

50. Public Issues

There were no public issues for this meeting.

51. Fee Review - Gambling Act, Scrap Metal, Pleasure Boats, Sex Establishments and Licensing Act

The Interim Head of Safer Communities 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 the report was for the Licensing Committee to consider a cost of living increase in the non-statutory set fees charged for licences/registrations administered by the Licensing Committee. Options available to Members were to agree or amend as they deemed fit the proposed fees set out in the appendices to the report or maintain the current fee structure.

The Interim Head of Safer Communities responded to questions and comments from committee members on the reasons for the proposed increase in fees and the levels at which some fees had been set. Key points raised and clarified included:

- The proposed fees were calculated on a cost recovery basis, taking into account all factors involved in providing each element of the service.
- It was noted that staff salaries and the cost of supplies had increased and could increase further.
- It was noted that there was a statutory set maximum which could be charged for some fees.
- The proposed fees would ensure overall costs were recovered. This may not be the case if considering each fee in isolation, however it was not the intention to calculate fees on the basis of some fees subsidising others.
- The Council had no control over Licensing Act 2003 fees as these were set by Central Government and had not been reviewed since 2005. It was noted that the Local Government Association were among those lobbying for change. The level of the existing fees was somewhat mitigated by the high number of licensing act applications and efficiencies in process.

A Committee Member felt some fees were excessive in terms of the percentage increases proposed and was concerned for the impact on small businesses. A move to amend the proposed fees to be accepted but with a limit of a 15% increase in any individual fee was seconded but was unsuccessful when put to a vote, with 2 votes in favour and 9 against.

The majority of Committee Members did not consider a fixed percentage increase across the board would give a true reflection of how each individual fee was calculated. It was noted that this was a complex process which required significant input from the Council's Finance Officer. The fees as proposed would ensure that overall cost recovery was achieved.

**RESOLVED that the proposed fees as stated in the appendices to the report be agreed.**

Voting: For – 10, Against – 1, Abstain – 0

## 52. Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Fees

The Interim Head of Safer Communities presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes.

The purpose of the report was for the Committee to consider an increase to the fees charged by BCP Council to enable the Council to recover the costs for the administration of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing regime. The review was required due to increases in the Council's operating costs as a result of inflationary increases. Options available to Members were to agree or amend as they deemed fit the proposed fees set out in the appendix to the report or maintain the current fee structure.

The Interim Head of Safer Communities responded to questions and comments from committee members on the reasons for the proposed increase in fees and the levels at which some fees had been set. Key points raised and clarified included:

- It was noted that the Hackney Carriage Trade had received two fare increases this financial year and that the cost of fuel had now decreased.
- The finance officer had reviewed the proposed fees and confirmed that they were set appropriately.
- A fixed percentage increase across the board would not be appropriate. Not all fees were renewed at the same time. Vehicle fees were renewed annually, whereas those for drivers were every three years and for operators every five years. There were also more costs involved in licensing the hackney carriage regime than private hire.
- There was a recognised national shortage of drivers, reasons for this included the impact of Brexit and Covid, the retirement of older drivers and the need for more onerous checks required by statutory guidance.
- That said, it was noted that the Council was still receiving driver applications and forthcoming knowledge tests were fully booked.

A Committee Member questioned the rationale for the proposed fees which he felt were excessive in terms of percentage increase and would have a detrimental impact. Other Committee Members felt that the proposed increases were reasonable and referred to the current base figures involved, the recent fare increases for the Trade and the need to cover the overall costs of providing the service. It was noted that the some of the fee calculations also took into account supplier costs which had risen dramatically.

**RESOLVED that the proposed fees as stated in the appendix to the report be agreed.**

Voting: For – 9, Against – 1, Abstain – 0

The Committee was advised that the proposed fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing would now be subject to a statutory consultation with a process in place to consider any objections if received as set out in paragraphs 9 – 12 of the report.

The meeting ended at 10.50 am

CHAIR