

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

[\(Meeting held on 10 February 2023\)](#)

1. FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2023-2024 – LICENSING SERVICE

As part of the annual review of budgets, the Committee has reviewed non-statutory fees and charges for the Licensing Service for 2022/2023.

The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences, registrations and permits. Many of these schemes allow the Council to charge a fee, payable by an applicant for a licence, permit or registration, to cover the costs of the administration of those licence types.

Fees are set under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 and the Council has no discretion in amending these. Gambling premises licence fees are capped and permit and lottery fees are fixed amounts. However, the Council is able to set fees for a number of other licence types; Taxis (drivers, vehicles and operators), Animal Welfare (boarding breeding, riding and pet shops), Piercing (tattoo, acupuncture and skin piercing) and Pleasure boats (boatmen and vessels), residential caravan sites and scrap metal dealers (site and collectors).

At their meeting on 10 February 2023, the General Purposes and Licensing Committee considered a report on the Licensing services' discretionary fees and charges for 2023/2024.

The Licensing service proposed an increase in the fees and charges for the 2023/2024 financial year, as detailed in the report for Item 4 in the agenda. The Committee were reminded that the purpose of the fees and charges were not to generate profit but were, where possible, to cover the costs of the service. It was explained that the cost of administering the Licensing service and the additional work, such as premises inspections, were gauged when calculating the new fees and charges. The inflation rate rise was also a major consideration. Members acknowledged that many of the licensable activities related to people's jobs and employment and that the cost-of-living crisis continued to impact people's finances. Therefore, a large increase in fees would not be desirable and that only the reasonable increase in fees and charges, to cover service costs, as set out in the report, would be acceptable.

There are no proposed changes to the taxi and private hire fees at this current time due to a comprehensive review taking place of the taxi licensing policy in 2022, taking into account new statutory guidance, the fee structure, public safety and best practice and will be consulted on with Members, the trade, the public and all other relevant organisations.

RECOMMENDED:

That the recommended fees for the financial year 2023/24, as set out on pages 5 and 6 of the report to General Purposes and Licensing Committee at item 4 of the Committee agenda, be agreed.

CLLR S CLARKE

CHAIRMAN