

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF HAVANT

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 8 January 2020

Present

Councillor Keast (Chairman)

Councillors Carpenter, Diamond, Inkster, Rennie, Robinson, Wade and Weeks

17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hart, Kennett, Lloyd, Milne, Raines and Wade.

18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 3 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

21 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had nothing to report.

22 PRICES FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

Further to Minute 16/12/2019, the Committee reconsidered the increases to the prices for taxi and private hire licences for the financial year 2020/21 together with the findings of the task and finish group appointed to scrutinise the proposed changes.

The Committee noted that the task and finish group had held a meeting with the Environmental Health Manager (Food, Safety & Licensing) to discuss the proposed changes on 16 December 2019. The conclusion of the Panel was that the recommendations set out in the report submitted to the Committee on 5 December should be approved and that the impact of the changes be reviewed by the Committee within six months of the prices coming into effect.

In response to questions raised by the members, the Environmental Health Manager (Food, Safety & Licensing) advised that:

- (a) the processes undertaken by the team in relation to taxi and private hire licences, which could be recovered by licence fees, had been mapped and costed to ensure that the proposed fees were robust;
- (b) the fee for the change of name/address reflected the costs of the processes required to amend a licence and the fact that this work could be undertaken by any member of the team;
- (c) in most cases the Council was only requested to change an address or name in a licence once during its lifetime;
- (d) the proposed charge for a change of address/name did not appear unreasonable when compared with the fee set by the Government for the same process for a personal licence under the Licensing Act 2003. This fee (£10.50) was set in 2005 and was widely considered by Local Authorities as too low; and
- (e) although the benchmarking survey was useful in giving an indication of how the Councils fees and charges compared with other Councils, care should be taken when using this data as the Councils included in the survey could have different costs structures, staff structures, and processes.

Although some members of the Committee expressed concern about some of the proposed charges, a majority of the Committee accepted that, in view of the need to consult on the proposals within a tight timescale, the Committee did not, at this stage, have sufficient reasons to make any changes. However, the Committee considered that these changes should be monitored and the Committee undertake a more thorough review within six months of the fees coming into force.

RESOLVED that

- (A) the charges set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted to the Committee on 5 December 2019 be approved for consultation;
- (B) the necessary advertisement be placed;
- (C) if no representations are received in response to the consultation referred to in (a) above, Full Council be RECOMMENDED to implement the charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted to the Committee on 5 December 2019 for the financial year commencing 1 April 2020; and
- (D) the impact of the proposed changes be reviewed by the Committee in October 2020.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.24 pm

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Chairman