

LICENSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28 January 2015

Present: Councillor WJ Davies (Chair)

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| Councillors | S Niblock J Salter C Spriggs | L Fraser G Watt |
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Deputies: Councillors S Williams (In place of A Hodson)
C Carubia (In place of P Williams)

Apologies: Councillor M Sullivan

12 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non pecuniary interests in connection with any application on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

Councillors J Salter and G Watt both declared a non pecuniary interest in item 3, Wirral Award, by virtue of having nominated a candidate for the Award.

13 MINUTES

Resolved - That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2014 be approved.

14 WIRRAL AWARD 2014

Councillors J Salter and G Watt both declared a non pecuniary interest in this matter (see minute 12 above).

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services requested that the Committee agree that the Wirral Award 2014 be granted to the nominees recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party held on 11 December 2014. The Wirral Award was intended to confer civic recognition upon individuals or organisations resident or located in Wirral for an outstanding achievement within the previous twelve months, or for distinguished service to the Borough over a period of twenty years or more.

It was reported that once nominations were agreed, a presentation ceremony would be arranged which would be attended by The Mayor of Wirral, the

Leader of the Council, Group Leaders, the Chair of the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee, the Chief Executive and the nominees plus one guest each.

Resolved - That the Wirral Award 2014 be conferred on the recipients recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party, and that the suggested arrangements be agreed.

15 CHANGE OF POLLING PLACE FOR POLLING DISTRICT MB

The Head of Legal and Members Services and Monitoring Officer sought Members' approval to temporarily change the designated polling place for polling district MB.

It was reported that polling places were kept constantly under review and that all designated polling places had been contacted to check availability in preparation for the forthcoming combined UK Parliamentary General Election and Local Government Elections.

Members were informed that the manager of St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Upton, the polling place for polling district MB, had advised that the venue would not be available for use at the forthcoming combined UK Parliamentary General Election and Local Government Elections due to construction work being carried out that would not be completed in time. An alternative available venue, Upton Victory Hall, Salacre Lane, Upton Village had been inspected by Electoral Services and found to provide satisfactory facilities for a polling station with a cost of £500 to hire the premises.

Upton Ward Councillors had been consulted in relation to the suitable polling station available for use for polling district MB and were in favour of the use of Upton Victory Hall.

Resolved – That the polling place for polling district MB be changed to Upton Victory Hall, Salacre Lane, Upton Village, for the forthcoming combined UK Parliamentary General Election and Local Government Elections to be held on 7 May 2015.

16 PERIODIC REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES FOR TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment requested that Members review and approve the licence fees in respect of Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operators Licences with effect from 1 April 2015. It was reported that the fees must be reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether the income received for the previous year had been in line with the cost of delivering the service.

The Licensing Manager reported that the cost of a licence must be related to the cost of the licensing scheme itself and it would therefore be appropriate for a local authority to recover their administrative and other associated costs.

The Licensing Manager advised that a review had been undertaken and it had been identified that the projected income received for the financial year 2014-2015 would not cover the costs of delivering the service.

Members were advised that a review of the fee structure for the functions undertaken in the administration of licences for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators had been undertaken and it had been identified that the current fee structure did not reflect the administration costs of all the processes that were currently undertaken by the Licensing Service in respect of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage functions, however, the cost of these processes had been calculated and the proposed fees were set out within Appendix 1 to the report.

It was also reported that from January 2015 the licensing function would be subject to a 2.2% increase in staffing costs and Members were therefore requested to approve an increase in the current licensing fees to reflect the increase in this cost of the administration.

The Licensing Manager advised that no representations had been made by any member of the licensing trade and that they had been made aware of the proposed fees at the Joint Consultative Committee. Members were further advised that increases in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences and Private Hire Operators Licences must be advertised for a period of 28 days and should any objections be received, they would be reported back to this Committee for consideration.

Resolved – That the licence fees in respect of Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator Licences be approved with effect from 1 April 2015, as set out within Appendix 1 to the report, subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process.

17 PERIODIC REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES FOR MARRIAGE PREMISES LICENCES

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment reported upon a requirement to review and approve the licence fees in respect of Marriage Premises with effect from 1 April 2015.

The Licensing Manager reported that the Council were legally entitled to charge such a fee for licences that they considered reasonable with a view to recovering the costs of the issue and administration of the licence.

Members were advised that under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the cost of a licence must be related to the cost of the licensing scheme itself. It would therefore be appropriate for the Council to recover their administrative and other associated costs.

The Licensing Manager reported that estimated costs to the Licensing Section of licensing such premises had previously been calculated at £362 per application. A review of the costs had been undertaken and it had been identified that from January 2015 the licensing function would be subject to a 2.2% increase in staffing costs. Members were therefore asked to approve an increase in the licensing fee for Marriage Premises to £370 to reflect the increase in this cost of the administration.

Resolved – That the Marriage Premises Licence fee of £370 be approved with effect from 1 April 2015.

18 PERIODIC REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES SEXUAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUE LICENCES

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment reported upon a requirement to review and approve the licence fees in respect of Sexual Entertainment Venue Licences with effect from 1 April 2015.

The Licensing Manager reported that the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 enabled the authority to charge the applicant for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence, a "reasonable fee" and that all costs of providing the service should be included in the fee so that there would be no subsidisation by council tax payers.

The Licensing Manager reported that the current application fee and renewal fee for a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence was £1,200 and a review of the costs of administering this process and ensuring compliance had been undertaken. It had been identified that from January 2015 the licensing function would be subject to a 2.2% increase in staffing costs. Members were therefore asked to approve an increase in the licensing fee for Sexual Entertainment Venues to £1226 to reflect the increase in this cost of the administration.

Resolved – That the Sexual Entertainment Venue licensing fee of £1226 be approved with effect from 1 April 2015.