

## **Licensing Committee – Meeting held on Monday, 6th February, 2023.**

**Present:-** Councillors Cheema (Chair), Kaur (Vice-Chair), Bains, P. Bedi, Gill, Nazir, Qaseem and Strutton

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Sandhu

### **PART 1**

#### **21. Declarations of Interest**

None received.

#### **22. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10th October 2022**

**Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

#### **23. Guidance on Predetermination/ Predisposition - To Note**

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on predetermination and predisposition.

#### **24. Non-Executive (Licensing) Fees and Charges**

The Principal Licensing Officer set out details of the report which sought approval of fees and charges for non-executive functions related to licensing.

The Committee were informed that a review had been undertaken of all fees and charges which the Council charged for and this included the fees for services provided by the Licensing team. As part of the review, consideration had been given to the local economy which the licensing regime supported and where applicable the fees remained as reasonable as possible. Where proposed fee increases were above the prevailing rate of inflation, the price had been adjusted in line with providing that service. It was explained that certain fees were set by Central Government and the local authority had no discretion in changing these.

Members were informed that the fees for licensing functions must be ring fenced and be set at the cost for providing the function. Fees and charges were usually set annually but could in certain circumstances be increased during the year to ensure the licensing function was properly costed. A summary of the key proposed changes in fees was highlighted as set out in Appendix A to the report.

In the ensuing discussion Members were informed that the fees were last increased in 2015. Members expressed concern that a number of the proposed fee increases were double than those currently charged, and given the current cost of living crisis, likely to have a significant impact on users of the service. The Licensing Officer explained that any increase in fees was to

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cover the cost of providing that service. It was requested that review of fees be carried out on a more regular basis and at least biennially. It was explained that a number of factors, including change in management, lack of resources and the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in a delay in review of the fees and charges and that the Committee's comments would be relayed to the Licensing Manager.

Responding to how fees were calculated, it was noted that they took into account officer time spent on processing of applications, inspections and advice provided to applicants.

A Member requested that benchmarking information for fees charged by neighbouring local authorities be provided in future reports.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Members agreed that the fees and charges as detailed in the appendix to the report be approved.

**Resolved** - That the fees for licensing functions as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for the year 2023/24, except those marked 'for noting only'.

### **25. Members Attendance Record 2022/23**

**Resolved** - That details of the Members Attendance Record be noted.

### **26. Date of Next Meeting - 30th March 2023**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.10 pm)