

Runnymede Borough Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

12 November 2019 at 7.30 pm

Members of the

Committee Present: Councillors D Cotty (Chairman), E Gill (Vice-Chairman), J Broadhead, T Burton, D Clarke, J Furey, J Gracey, R King and P Snow.

Members of the

Committee absent: Councillors I Chaudhri and J Olorenshaw

319. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

320. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 25 June 2019 and the meetings of the Sub-Committee (Hearings under the Licensing Act 2003) held on 20 March and 4 April 2019 were signed as correct records.

321. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Chaudhri and J Olorenshaw.

322. FEES AND CHARGES 2020/2021

The Committee's approval was sought for the fees and charges, as set by statute, for the services falling under the Committee's remit. These were all the fees and charges under the Licensing Act 2003.

Members noted that ordinarily, when setting fees, the Council could take into account external factors such as inflation, market conditions, local competition and likely yield of any fee increase as well as internal policies such as on-going savings targets and revenue reduction programmes. However, as all fees were set by statute and had not been increased since their inception on 2003, the Committee was disappointed to note that the Licensing service was in deficit and had been for some years. The deficit was estimated to be approximately £16,000 for 2020/2021 and Members were furnished with the actual deficits for previous years.

The Committee sought details of how Runnymede's deficit compared with neighbouring authorities and asked for a breakdown of Licensing costs, once overheads and re-charges from other business centres had been quantified and removed, giving a base cost of the service. Details of the central budget recharges were requested so that Member could have a better understanding of the Council's position and the effect of not being able to set fees locally.

Officers confirmed that Runnymede had been one of the few local authorities to make representations as part of the Local Government Association's survey on fees. However, not enough authorities had responded for them to make a case to lobby central Government. The Committee requested details of the cumulative total deficit since the inception of the Licensing Act in 2003 and in future years send an annual letter to the Government to lobby for the ability to set fees locally and copied to the Local Government Association.

The Committee considered it would be helpful if Officers from Financial Services could be available to attend the meeting for the fees and charges item so their specialist knowledge could be shared with Members.

With regard to improving efficiency it was noted that the Vice-Chairman had arranged a meeting with Officers from Digital Services to discuss the Council's software for processing payments for Temporary Event Notices.

RESOLVED that –

The proposed fees and charges for 2020/2021 be approved to be effective from the dates given or as soon as practical thereafter.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.43 pm)