

# MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## LICENSING COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2022

#### Attendees:

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors Springett (Chairman) , Brindle, Coates, English, Fort, Garten, Hinder, Joy, Naghi, Partfitt-Reid, Mrs Robertson, J Sams and Spooner.</b>
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34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Trzebinski.

35. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Spooner was present as a substitute for Councillor Trzebinski.

36. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

37. VISITING MEMBERS

There was no Visiting Members.

38. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

39. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

40. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

41. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2022

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

42. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2022

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 October 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the correction of Councillor Coate's name within Minute 25.

43. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from local residents.

44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the chairman.

45. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENSING - UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and outlined the results of the unmet demand survey that was carried out by Licensed Vehicles Surveys and Assessment (LVSA) as part of Vector Transport Consultancy; there was currently no unmet demand, with the Committee requested to maintain the current hackney carriage licence limit. The last survey that was completed in 2019 found there was no unmet demand.

The Committee felt that the report provided was informative, and expressed support for maintaining the current limit on hackney carriage vehicle licences.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The report submitted by Licensed Vehicle Surveys & Assessment (LVSA) part of Vector Transport Consultancy indicating an absence of any significant demand, be considered; and
2. The current limit on numbers be maintained.

46. LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES 2023/2024

The Senior Licencing Officer introduced the report. and outlined the proposed fee increases of five-per-cent to the majority of the licensing partnership fees, alongside a two-per-cent increase to the services provided by the Council's licensing department. An increase was proposed to recover the service's cost, with the Council having experienced a deficit across the last three years of the service's provision.

It was stated that if the proposed hackney carriage and private hire taxi fees were agreed, the fees would be advertised before implementation. If any responses were received, these would be presented to the Committee for further consideration.

In response to questions, the Senior Licensing Officer stated that the fees relating to casinos had not been increased as there were no casinos within the borough. The Gambling Act fees shown with a grey background within point 2.6 of the report had been increased to the maximum permitted.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services stated that the fee increases proposed were intended to cover the service's cost, as opposed to generating income. The Council could be liable to challenge if the fees proposed were raised above the cost of providing the service. The cost of the licensing partnership was monitored on a quarterly basis with the partnership

organisations, with the costs considered across a three-year programme to ensure effective monitoring.

The Committee felt that the proposed fee increases were well evidenced, and necessary only to ensure that the Council recovered the cost of the service's provision. The Committee's previous actions to support the taxi trade through alternative measures was reiterated.

**RESOLVED:** That,

1. The fee levels as set out at 2.7, 2.9, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14 and 2.15 of the report for implementation on 1 April 2023, be approved; and
2. The fee level as set out at 2.6 of the report for implementation on 1 April 2023 be approved, with any consultation responses received to be presented to the committee for consideration before that fees implementation.

47. DURATION

6:30 p.m. until 7:01 p.m.