

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillor Springett (Chairman) and Councillors Coates, English, Fort, Garten, Hinder, Joy, Naghi, Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Robertson, J Sams, Trzebinski and J Wilkinson
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29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

30. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

31. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

32. VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

33. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

34. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

35. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public, with Item 13 – Minutes (PART II) of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2023 to be considered alongside Item 9 - Minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2023, unless any Committee Member wished to refer to the information contained within the former in which case the Committee would have to enter into closed session due to the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

36. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

37. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

38. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

39. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

40. LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES 2024/2025

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and outlined the proposed fee increase of 6% which was felt to be suitable against the current inflation rate of 6.7%. The options available to the Committee were outlined.

In response to questions the Senior Licensing Officer stated that some of the 'Other Costs' fees contained within point 2.5 of the report were Licensing Hub services and that the Head of Licensing had set those fees taking into account officer time and that it was in alignment with other authorities in the Licensing Partnership. The Head of Licensing would provide further information outside the meeting on the fees contained within point 2.5 of the report.

In response to further questions the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services stated that the increase in licensing fees was to cover the cost of running the service, and although it was not covered exactly, the costs of the service were distributed among the authorities in the Licensing Partnership in a rolling three-year programme that would mitigate against discrepancies in individual years. The fees were also reviewed every financial quarter as part of the Department's budget meeting with the Council's Director of Finance. It was further stated that if licensing fees were set too high it could risk a legal challenge and that if the service did produce a profit it would be redistributed to the trade.

The Committee felt that the proposed fee increases were justified and necessary to ensure that the service continued and that costs were covered.

RESOLVED: That,

1. The fee levels as set out at 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11 of the report for implementation on 1 April 2024, be approved; and
2. That the fee level as set out at 2.5 of the report for implementation on 1 April 2024 be approved, with any responses received to the published notice to be presented to the committee for consideration before that fees implementation.

41. MINUTES (PART II) OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 9 – Minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee held on 6 September 2023.

42. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 6.58 p.m.