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## GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE, 23.06.14

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**Present:** Councillors Eddie Dogan, Huw Edwards, Annwen Hughes, Louise Hughes, W. Tudor Owen, Angela Russell, Ann Williams, Elfed W. Williams, Eryl Jones-Williams

**Also Present:** Siôn Huws (Compliance and Language Manager), Gwenan M. Williams (Public Protection Manager (Health and Safety and Licensing)), John Reynolds (Senior Public Protection Manager) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer)

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In accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4/ Procedural Rules/10 Para 1, 2 and 5) it was noted:

"The same member shall not serve as chairman of more than one committee. This provision will not prevent a member who is a committee chair from taking the chair at a committee if the persons appointed are absent; a meeting of a committee or sub-committee must appoint from amongst the voting members present and who are members of the Council, a person to preside over that meeting."

The Compliance and Language Manager outlined the need to appoint a Chairman and Vice-chairman for the General Licensing Committee. The arrangement seen for the period from 2012-2014 was that one Chairman chaired the Central Licensing Committee and the General Licensing Committee. However, Members' attention was drawn to the need to deal with the two committees as two separate committees (although membership was the same). It was noted that only one allowance was available for the Licensing Committees.

In order to deal with the matter appropriately, Members of the Committee requested that the Compliance and Language Manager provided a report in writing in order to discuss the matter in detail at the next meeting of the Licensing Committee on 15.9.14.

**In accordance with the above rule, Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams was appointed as Chairman for this meeting only.**

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Dilwyn Lloyd, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Chris O'Neal and Peter Read.

### **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

### **3. URGENT ITEMS**

No item to consider.

### **4. MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2014, as a true record.

### **5. PROPOSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE, PRIVATE HIRE AND OPERATORS LICENCE FEES**

Submitted – the report of the Head of Regulatory Department, requesting the Committee to consider and approve the proposal to raise all taxi fees by 19.78%. It was noted that the proposed increase would be dependent on a statutory consultation with the taxi industry and the costs of providing the service would be assessed annually.

It was highlighted that the fees raised had to be reasonable and the Council's decision was to set the fees at a level that would enable the Council to recover the full or partial costs.

In a report to the General Licensing Committee on 24.6.2013, an increase of 25% on all taxi fees was recommended with a further increase for the purpose of moving towards the full recovery of costs in 2014/15.

Following direct consultation with the taxi industry, any objections to the fees would have to be considered by the Committee at their next meeting (15.9.2014) and a decision would have to be made on fee levels in accordance with that.

In response to a question by Members, the Public Protection Manager (Health and Safety and Licensing) noted the costs for Gwynedd (£260.52), compared with other counties in Wales, which varied from Anglesey (£196.00), to Swansea (£399.00).

Members noted that when consulting with the taxi industry, the situation had to be explained clearly with a request for the Communications Unit to engage effectively with the industry and the public to promote the fact that the Council had kept costs low over the preceding years.

It was acknowledged that the situation was difficult and that the increase was substantial. Nevertheless, it was impossible to carry the financial loss. The service had to be protected to ensure support for the industry.

It was proposed and seconded that information regarding the comparative costs in Wales be sent to Committee Members and to the taxi industry.

It was proposed and seconded that officers of the Licensing Unit should examine flexible options to address the needs of applicants to pay for

licences.

It was proposed and seconded that the Cabinet Member, John Wyn Williams be invited to the next meeting on 15 September 2014.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **To support the recommendation of the Head of the Regulatory Department to increase the fees conditional on the results of the statutory consultation.**
- **To distribute comparative information to Committee Members and the taxi industry.**
- **To request the Licensing Unit to consider flexible options to address the applicant's needs when paying for a licence.**
- **To invite the Cabinet Member to the next meeting.**

The meeting commenced at 10.45am and concluded at 11.45am.