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## GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE, 15-03-21

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### **Attendance:**

**Councillors:** Steve Collings, Annwen Hughes, Edgar Owen, Elfed Williams, Gareth Morris Jones, Elin W Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Angela Russell, Gareth Williams and Roy Owen

### **Officers:**

Geraint Brython Edwards (Solicitor), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head - Environment), Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2020/21**

**RESOLVED TO RE-ELECT COUNCILLOR ELFED WILLIAMS AS CHAIR FOR 2020/21**

#### **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2020/21**

**RESOLVED TO RE-ELECT COUNCILLOR ANNWEN HUGHES AS VICE-CHAIR FOR 2020/21**

#### **3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor John Brynmor Hughes and Councillor Dafydd Owen

#### **4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

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

#### **5. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note

#### **6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair signed the minutes of a meeting of this committee that took place on 2 December 2019, as a true record.

#### **7. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEES**

Accepted, for information, the minutes of the Sub-committees held on

26-01-2021, 08-12-2020, 22-10-2020, 06-10-2020, 09-07-2020, 09-03-2020  
12-02-2020, 18-12-2019 and 21-11-2019

## **8. PROPOSED TAXI LICENCE FEES 2021/22**

Submitted - the report of the Licensing Manager, requesting that the Committee approve the proposed taxi licence fees for 2021/22. Members were reminded that this committee had resolved back in 2013 that taxi fees would be reviewed annually, in order to fully recover costs. It was highlighted that Gwynedd's fees had not changed since 2019.

In assessing the situation and considering the impacts on the industry as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, it was suggested that there was no justification for substantially increasing the taxi licence fees for the next financial year, but that the committee should only consider an increase to all taxi licence fees to account for inflation over the past two years. It was estimated that this would equate to an increase of 2.56% on all licence fees.

It was recommended that the Committee approve raising the fees to the proposed level, subject to consultation with the taxi industry and consultation via a public notice.

Members expressed their thanks for the report, and for the support the Licensing Unit had given to the taxi industry during the time of the crisis.

It was proposed and seconded to defer the decision to increase the fees for a year, and to request the Finance Department to use additional funds received from the Government to respond to the impact of Covid-19.

An amendment to the proposal to raise the fees was proposed and seconded, as funding would need to be cut from another service to close the gap.

Matters arising from the ensuing discussion:

- Sympathy with the taxi industry was expressed, as with all other industries that had suffered as a result of Covid-19
- There was a need to protect our communities
- In raising the fees, £8 would be the maximum increase

In response to a question regarding comparison of the fees with those of other councils across the North, it appeared that Gwynedd's fees, in general, lay mid table.

The Assistant Head - Environment added that the principle of recovering costs only had been established in 2013, and if the service did not recover those costs by charging fees, the funding would have to be sought from other sources. It was reported that the fees had not increased since 2019, and that the industry had received support via additional financial sources to ensure 'safety' during the time of crisis.

A vote was taken on the proposal to increase the fees

**RESOLVED TO REFUSE THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE FEES TO THE RECOMMENDED LEVEL**

The meeting commenced at 10:00am and concluded at 10:50am.