



## **Locally-set licensing fees: Clifton Davies to attend Home Office workshop on 25 March 2014**



On 13 February 2013, the Home Office launched a public consultation on a move from centrally-set to locally-set fees under the Licensing Act 2003, which, if implemented, would be likely to result in licensing fees rising in England and Wales.

It has been driven by arguments from some licensing authorities that they face significant deficits, given that licensing fee levels have been unchanged since they were set in 2005. The essential considerations are as follows:

- Provisions in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 enable locally-set fees based on recovery of the costs that licensing authorities incur in carrying out their licensing functions
- The Home Office believes that centrally-set fees do not reflect that costs vary "for legitimate reasons" in different areas and that raising fees to recover costs in one area would mean fee-payers paying too much in another
- Locally-set fees cannot be used to raise extra revenue nor are they tools to tackle crime (although EMROs and late night levies are)
- They must be set transparently and be based on evidence and the Home Office proposes introducing caps on the level of each fee
- The Home Office is also conducting a survey of costs incurred by licensing authorities in performing each licensing function
- The consultation runs until 10 April and the questions posed in the Home Office consultation document (including whether there should be a single national payment date for annual fees) and means of responding can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/locally-set-licensing-fees>

We will be attending a Home Office workshop on this subject in central London on Tuesday 25 March. If anyone reading this article would like us to raise anything on their behalf, please contact us urgently on either of the below email addresses.

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