

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** held in **Council Chamber B, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT** on **Tuesday 12 April 2016**.

(10.00 - 10.50 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Martin Wale (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Wes Read
Jason Baker	David Recardo
Dave Bulmer	Garry Shortland
Val Keitch	Alan Smith
Tony Lock	Linda Vijeh
David Norris	Peter Gubbins
Crispin Raikes	

Also Present:

Peter Gubbins

Officers

Jo Morris	Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Marston	Licensing Manager
Ann Chislett	Legal Executive

Note: All decisions were approved without dissent unless shown otherwise.

30. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 19th January 2016 and various Licensing Sub Committee meetings (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read, and having been approved were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the proceedings. Various Licensing Sub Committee meetings were also signed by the relevant councillors who had chaired those meetings.

31. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Bloomfield and Jenny Kenton.

32. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Public Participation at Committees (Agenda Item 4)

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public.

34. Enforcement Update (Agenda Item 5)

In the absence of the Licensing Enforcement Officer, the Licensing Manager summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the work of the Licensing Enforcement Team and the various issues that they were currently involved with including Taxis & Private Hire Vehicles, Street Trading and Scrap Metal Dealers.

In response to member questions, the Licensing Manager explained that:

- It was down to the individual operators to carry out appropriate vehicle checks. He would expect the operators to have a tick sheet for checking their vehicles and for an inspection to take place before they set off. It was clear that this was not always happening;
- The number of taxi/private hire related complaints was fairly level, previously there had been many more issues. The new policy for vehicles being no more than five years old at first registration had helped;
- The Licensing Department had the authority to issue a Section 68 'Stop' notice on a vehicle if necessary;
- All visits to Scrap Metal Dealers were undertaken on the basis of a risk assessment. Officers had the use of lone working monitoring devices which had a panic button. Visits to new Scrap Metal Dealers were undertaken in pairs. Officer safety was always taken seriously and proper procedures were followed. The Chairman advised that he had raised the need for a dedicated Police Officer to accompany and assist the Enforcement Officer at a Police Panel meeting and would continue to raise the issue;
- Although 10% of vehicles receiving penalty points was not an acceptable figure it was at the lower end of the scale compared to other local authorities.

During discussion on the item, it was proposed that Officers look into the possibility of whether a condition could be added to vehicle licences to ensure that vehicle checks are undertaken. One member commented that it would be difficult for loan drivers to undertake vehicle checks and therefore we should be careful how check sheets are enforced as they would not always be practical. It was agreed that the Licensing Manager would look at whether it was possible to enforce Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle checks and report back to the next meeting.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report be noted;
 2. That the proposal to consider whether to include a condition on vehicle licences to ensure that vehicle checks are undertaken be further considered by the Licensing Manager and a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee.
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35. SSDC Taxi Fare Formula Setting (Agenda Item 6)

The Licensing Manager summarised the report as set out in the agenda. He explained that the fare setting formula devised sought to demonstrate the true costs of providing taxis and the cost per mile figure necessary to sustain the valuable public service

economically. It was proposed to commence the statutory objection period, with the advertisement of the public notice on 21st April ending 5th May 2016. He referred members to the draft proposed hackney carriage passenger fare levels and additional charges as outlined in Appendix A and highlighted that the last increase in taxi fares was in April 2008.

During discussion on the item, the Licensing Manager noted the comments of members and responded to questions on points of detail which included the following:

- A member referred to the AA figures and commented that petrol figures were much lower now compared to when the last review was undertaken. She also commented that rural location was very relevant as journeys take longer. In response, the Licensing Manager explained that petrol price was only one element of the AA figures and that the figures also included wear and tear, car tax and insurance and these areas had not decreased in the intervening period;
- It would take some time to meet 25% of the fleet being wheelchair accessible although numbers were gradually increasing;
- An explanation of the tariffs as referred to in Appendix A was outlined as follows: Tariff 1 daytime up to 11pm, Tariff 2 11pm until 6.00am, Tariff 3 bank holidays including Christmas Day and New Years Day;

Following discussion on the item, the majority of members supported the recommendations of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the proposed formula for taxi fare setting be approved;
 2. That the proposed increases in hackney carriage passenger fares and associated charges within the district, as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
 3. That the Licensing Manager undertake the required statutory advertising of the proposed fares and charges;
 4. In the event of any objections to the proposed fares being received during the statutory objection period, which are not resolved, then the Licensing Manager reviews any objections received in conjunction with the Chair of the Licensing Committee.

(Voting: 11 in favour, 1 against, 0 abstentions)

36. Licensing Fees & Charges 2016 - 17 (Agenda Item 7)

The Licensing Manager reported that due to an administration error the agenda report had not been sent out to the four people who had objected to the proposed fees and suggested that the item be deferred. Members were in agreement for the report to be deferred to a Special meeting of the Licensing Committee. It was agreed that the meeting would be held on Tuesday 26th April 2016 at 10.00am at the Council Offices.

- RESOLVED:** That the report on Licensing Fees & Charges 2016-17 be deferred to a Special Meeting of the Licensing Committee to be held on Tuesday 26th April at 10.00am in Council Chamber B.

37. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 8)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Licensing Committee would be held on Tuesday 7th June 2016 at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman

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Date