

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2013 commencing at 6.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Pett (Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Clark, Fittock, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Piper, Raikes and Walshe

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllrs. Cooke, Davison and Mrs. Dawson

Order of the Agenda

The Chairman announced that, with the permission of the Committee, the minutes would be considered as the final item of business to allow as many Members of the Sub-Committees to be present as possible.

16. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

17. Actions from the previous meeting

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

18. Licensing of Sex Shops, Sex Cinemas and Sexual Entertainment Venues Policy

The Licensing Committee had formally resolved on 6 September 2012 to adopt additional powers to regulate Sexual Entertainment Venues under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. It was felt appropriate to adopt a policy, to be called the Sex Policy, before any application for a licence was made.

A draft version of the policy had been shown to the Committee on 10 October 2012 and a consultation was held between 30 October 2012 and 11 January 2013. The feedback from the consultation was available to Members in an appendix to the report but the Licensing Partnership Manager clarified that no changes had been made to the policy since it was last considered by the Committee.

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Assessment had been held on the policy. The recommended action arising was to ensure all Members were given appropriate training. The training should address the impact of licences on more vulnerable age groups when determining a licence application. Officers were intending to provide some training soon but would refresh this training in the future if an application were likely to be submitted. Members noted the equality impacts.

Resolved: That the consultation responses be noted and the policy be recommended for adoption by Full Council.

19. Gambling Act 2005 – Fees for 2013/14

The report set out the proposed fees under the Gambling Act 2005 for the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The fees continued to be based on cost-recovery plus inflation. Officers had used the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) toolkit to calculate the costs for the Licensing Team over the year while assessing the risk of any additional costs. It was clarified that inflation on the fees was generally set at 2% and rounded to 5 or 0. Although the Council had based its budget on a higher level of inflation at 2.5%, it was explained that Officers limited the fees strictly on a cost recovery basis.

Seven betting shops were currently subject to fees within the District and it was estimated this would generate £3,500 if each were charged the proposed annual fee of £500.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that there were no adverse equality impacts arising from the report.

Resolved: That the Gambling Act 2005 fees for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.

20. Hackney Carriage And Private Hire Licensing - License Fees 2013/14

The Licensing Partnership Manager explained that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing fees had been set on cost recovery basis with an inflationary increase of 2.5%, in line with the Council's budget, on the existing fees. The taxi licensing service was required to be self-financing and the recommended fee increases would ensure this.

She advised that the joint Licensing Partnership had helped to keep fees lower. The medical fee for driver licences had reduced by £5 since the service had been retendered to The Cedars Surgery. There had been no increase for three years in the fee for vehicle compliance testing carried out by the Council.

A Member raised concern at the large number of vehicles at Sevenoaks Station plying trade and whether the situation was sustainable. The Licensing Partnership Manager advised that the Council had continued to receive applications from drivers seeking to work in the District and that the number of Hackney Carriage licence holders had not significantly increased from when the number of licenses was delimited, but the number has remained at approximately 205. The station was, however, private land and parking arrangements had been outsourced to Meteor Parking by Southeastern Railways. Meteor intended to reduce the number of permits from 90 to 60 through natural wastage. The Council was in discussions with Southeastern Railways to provide more taxi-ranking space but there was no immediate opportunity and there would be cost implications for Southeastern Railways.

If approved, Officers would then inform all Hackney Carriage proprietors, Private Hire Operators and drivers to allow comment.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that there were no adverse equality impacts arising from the report.

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Resolved: that from 1 April 2013 the list of fees and associated costs for licences in respect of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators be varied as per the report, subject to the responses received following consultation with the trade.

21. Minutes

A Member proposed some additional wording for the minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee hearing on 10 December 2012 at which that Member had been speaking on behalf of residents who objected to the application. Members who had sat on the panel were asked for their views. Following discussion and with minor alteration, most of the proposals were agreed.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 10 October 2012 and of the Sub-Committees held on 12 November 2012, 10 December 2012 as amended and 14 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman noted it was his last meeting of the Committee as Chairman and thanked all past and present Members of the Committee for their support, encouragement and advice. He also thanked the Officers who supported the Committee.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.37 pm

Chairman

