

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor Joy (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Garten, McLoughlin,
Naghi, Perry, J Sams, Springett and Mrs Wilson

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Cuming, Mrs Grigg, Mrs Hinder, B Mortimer, Newton and Mrs Robertson.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were noted:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Mrs Robertson
Councillor Perry for Councillor Mrs Hinder
Councillor Blackmore for Councillor Cuming

3. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

4. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

5. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

6. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

It was noted that Councillors Mrs Joy, Garten, McLoughlin, Naghi and Mrs Springett had been lobbied on Agenda Item 13 – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing: Licence Fees and Charges Fees 2017/2018.

7. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public.

8. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2017**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

9. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

10. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

12. ORAL UPDATE - MEMBER TRAINING

The Head of Housing and Community Services advised the Committee that the Council's Constitution required Members and Substitutes of Licensing Committee to attain a certain level of training agreed by Members.

However, the Officer advised that due to the fact that this had been the first meeting of the year for Licensing Committee, it would be more prudent to wait until after the Borough Elections next May to conduct detailed training.

Members were advised that there would be a training session organised by an external barrister on 30th January 2018 for both Officers and Members.

RESOLVED: That the oral update be noted.

13. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES FEES 2017/2018

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services which related to Fees and Charges 2017/18 -Taxis and Private Hire.

In response to questions from Members, the Officer advised that:-

- Hackney Carriage numbers were currently limited to 48 in the Maidstone Borough area. The unmet demand survey conducted in 2015 recommended that consideration be given to removing the cap on a number of hackney vehicles in Maidstone and guidance suggested that there should not be limits unless there was specific justification. A consultation with the trade would be carried out shortly on this.
- The knowledge test fee had been separated out from the driver's licence figures.

- The fees and charges are calculated according to the outlay of the Council and they are the best that can be offered.
- There was no room for manoeuvre as the figures had been based on the efficiencies of the services gained already.
- There had been higher charges on operators with larger numbers of vehicles as suggested by the representation but it had not been very helpful as in relation to enforcement larger operators tended to take less time than operators who were owner/drivers as they often failed to keep their own accurate operator records.
- In terms of drivers working outside the Borough, there are implications but it was nothing that the Council could do about it.
- In terms of the age and mileage restrictions on licensed vehicles in the policy, this would be reviewed separately, particularly in terms of alternative fuels and would be linked with the Low Emissions Strategy. A report could be brought to the March meeting.
- Some of the fees had reduced and this had been as a result of efficiencies, such as some activities being carried out on-line.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the proposed fees and charges and associated costs for licences in respect of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators, as set out in paragraph 2.14 of the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services, be approved after consideration being given to the written objection received on 19 September 2017 in response to the 28 day consultation and to be effective from 5 December 2017.
- 2) That a report be produced by Officers to come to the March meeting reviewing the Taxi Policy which would cover the age and mileage restrictions and types of vehicles and alternative fuels used and would link into the Low Emissions Strategy.

Voting: For: unanimous

14. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.