

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 JULY 2019

Present: Councillor Joy (Chairman), and
Councillors Fissenden, Fort, Garten, Mrs Grigg,
Hinder, Mrs Hinder, Naghi, Mrs Robertson, M Rose
and Springett

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors McLoughlin and J Sams.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

9. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

10. VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 21 May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee Meeting held on 28 March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

16. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee Meeting held on 7 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

17. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme and noted that the Statement of Licensing Principles for Gambling Act 2005 2019-2022 was approved and would be deleted from the Work Programme to be brought back in 2021 for review unless there are any changes to the legislation in the interim.

The item relating to Revisiting Licensing Applications – Site Visits was discussed and the following comments were made:-

- That there should be a mix of daytime and night time inspections of premises for Members to visit.
- That site visits be organised on a regular basis, at least every 9 months.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted as amended.

18. MBC LICENSING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT 2019

The Committee considered the report of the Head of the Licensing Partnership which provided an annual update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership.

The Head of the Licensing Partnership advised that the performance of the Partnership had been generally high performing despite many challenges of the past year which included:-

- The Tri-annual review of the gambling policy;
- The introduction of new Animal licensing legislation (which came into effect with a very tight timescale);
- Staff turnover within the hub team

In response to questions from Members, the Head of the Licensing Partnership advised that:-

- Due to the new Animal Licensing legislation that became effective in October 2018, with very little lead in time, this had created a significant amount of work for the teams, particularly with members of the public querying the interruption of the legislation.
- A report would come to the Committee in November providing an update on activity associated with the Animal Welfare Licensing legislation, including information about the number and type of premises inspected and licences issued.
- If a breeder charged a fee for an animal, then they would need to be licensed.
- The Animal Welfare Team had an enforcement and inspection role and would respond to complaints/reports and seek out unlicensed breeders by scanning the internet and local adverts.
- Bromley Council advised that they did not want to join the Partnership for financial reasons.
- The Partnership was fairly well resourced and staff do not answer telephone calls from the public until they had been properly trained.
- The taxi driver knowledge test had been changed to make the questions clearer and was marked automatically so there was no requirement for staff to spend time marking the test.
- Charging points for electric taxis are available in Maidstone but are limited in number; at present there were only 4 taxis that are fully electric.
- Although there was an appetite amongst the Taxi trade to change to electric vehicles, it would need to work for them in terms of their business plans linked to the cost of providing their existing vehicles.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Licensing Partnership for all their hard work.

RESOLVED: That the performance of the partnership as detailed in the report be noted.

19. AMENDMENTS TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Licensing Manager which set out the consultation responses to the amended draft Taxi Licensing Policy for approval to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee.

It was noted that at the meeting of the Committee on 28th March 2019 Members requested some minor amendments to be made to the policy prior to consultation and agreed on a 6 week consultation to take place. The consultation run from 11th April to 16th May 2019.

The findings of the survey resulted in almost two thirds of residents being in favour of the proposed changes to the licensing policy. The areas of greater concern appeared to be around the changes proposed to testing of knowledge and driver standards.

RESOLVED: That the Licensing Committee recommend to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee that the amended Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy be adopted.

Voting: For: unanimous

20. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.20 p.m.