

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JULY 2018

Present: Councillor Joy (Chairman), and
Councillors Garten, Mrs Grigg, Harvey, Hinder,
Mrs Hinder, McKay, McLoughlin, Purle, Mrs Robertson,
J Sams and Springett

Also Present: Councillor Kimmance

6. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

7. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

9. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Kimmance was present as a Visiting Member and indicated his wish to speak on Agenda Item 11 – Hackney Carriage Licence – Survey on Deregulation.

10. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

Councillor Mrs Springett arrived at 6.33 p.m. as this item was being discussed.

11. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

All Members stated that they had been lobbied on Agenda Item 11 – Hackney Carriage Licence – Survey on Deregulation except for Councillors B Hinder and Mrs Hinder.

12. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

Councillor Mrs Sams arrived as this item was being discussed at 6.38 p.m.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme.

It was noted that the last item on the table should read: Gambling Act 2005: Licence Fees **2019/20**.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

16. HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE – SURVEY ON DEREGULATION

Mr John Littlemore, the Head of Housing and Community Services presented a report which set out the results of a 12 week consultation with stakeholders on three options for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences which were:-

1. Maintain the current limit on Hackney Carriage numbers; or
2. Issue any number of additional vehicle licences as appropriate; or
3. Remove the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers

The Committee noted that the survey had had 474 responses (which included 120 taxi drivers or representatives of taxi businesses). 59% of respondents indicated that 48 hackney carriage vehicles was about right.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Littlemore stated that:-

- the Committee had requested at its meeting on 1st December 2016 that a 12 week consultation be undertaken on the three options for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences with a view to a report back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity. He also advised that an Unmet Demand Survey was due to be undertaken in July 2019 that would highlight significant unmet demand should there be any.
- in terms of a modal shift for transport, there was a move to electric and hybrid vehicles and consideration of more taxi provision being allowed into the town centre, rather than vehicles coming into park in the town centre.
- the Council do not have the necessary powers to stop taxis from other districts coming into the town centre. Any enforcement issues would have had to be reported to the authority from where

the licence was issued.

- if hackney carriage vehicles were to operate in the town that are not licensed by this authority then they are required to operate as a private hire vehicle, not a hackney carriage vehicle.

RESOLVED: That the results of the Hackney Carriage Licence Survey on Deregulation be noted.

17. STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES FOR GAMBLING ACT 2005 2019 - 2022

The Committee considered the report of Mr Littlemore which included a draft Statement of Licensing Principles for the Gambling Act 2005.

Mr Littlemore advised that it was a requirement of Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 for Licensing Authorities to prepare and publish a statement of licensing principles and it was proposed to carry out a 12 week consultation exercise on the proposed principles which would commence on 23 July 2018.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Littlemore advised that:-

- although the consultation period would include the summer holidays, it would be for 12 weeks so it would give people a reasonable time period to respond.
- he would ask the Communications Team if they could keep promoting the consultation during the whole period.
- the consultation would be brought to the attention of interested parties.
- that the 'triggers' set out in paragraph 6 of the report were already in the Gambling Act and did not need to be repeated in the policy.
- that the last paragraph of the policy should be re-worded to emphasise the impact that problem gambling can have on health and wellbeing and how that relates to the Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the draft Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2019-2022 is approved for public consultation.
- 2) That Officers be instructed to carry out the consultation over a 12 week period.

Voting: For: unanimous

18. LICENSING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Sharon Bamborough, the Head of Licensing Partnership which outlined the performance of the Licensing Partnership.

Mrs Bamborough explained that the Partnership currently consisted of four authorities which were Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils and the London Borough of Bexley.

The Committee noted that the last year had been a particularly difficult one for the Partnership and the team as the Licensing Partnership Manager, Claire Perry had suddenly passed away.

Mrs Bamborough emphasised that despite the huge challenges of the past year, the officers had shown drive and determination not to see the service fail despite there being long term sickness, performance issues and staff vacancies.

It was noted that Maidstone's performance had been generally good.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Bamborough advised that:-

- she was not aware of any other Partnerships in the Kent area of a similar size.
- there were many advantages to being in the Partnership, one was resilience as it allowed other teams to step in when required, secondly there was a cross fertilisation of ideas, sharing experiences and collaboration, and importantly not working in isolation and; thirdly providing savings on economies of scale, such as being able to deliver training sessions at a vastly reduced rate which enabled more staff to be trained effectively.
- that the Licence Tracker had been taken down as it relied on information being put on manually by staff which was quite onerous on those already stretched resources. However, there was an app where anyone could register for and search for a specific licence or even an area.

Mrs Bamborough also advised the Committee on the areas she was working on for the coming year, which included:-

KPIs – the key performance indicators focussed too much on speed not on quality and the work of the Senior Licensing Officer was not showcased. They will therefore change to give a bigger picture on what they do.

New I.T. System – looking at a new management system which would produce a massive benefit to the teams.

Pre-App Advice – investigating the possibility of providing paid for pre-app advice on how to submit a good application.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Bamborough advised that:-

- the new animal licences would include dog breeding and day care for dogs. However, she undertook to advise all Members on whether it would include dog training.
- the London Borough of Bromley were in talks with the Partnership with a view to joining.
- the new animal regulations are already included on the website.

The Committee asked Mrs Bamborough to pass on their thanks to the teams for continue to work in such challenging circumstances.

RESOLVED: That the performance of the Licensing Partnership be noted.

19. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.40 p.m.