

Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 1 February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Augustine Ononaji (Vice-Chair), Daniel Chukwu, Cathy Kent, Ben Maney, Shane Ralph and Graham Snell

Apologies: Councillors Colin Churchman, Tony Fish, Elizabeth Rigby and Sue Sammons

In attendance: Paul Adams, Licensing Manager
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting on 28 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

7. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Kent declared an interest in that she knew one of the taxi drivers who was mentioned in item 7, Taxi Licensing Policy- Language Proficiency Update.

9. Review of Street Trading Policy

The Licensing Manager presented the report at pages 9 to 26 of the agenda.

During discussions Members raised concerns on the request for traders to be DBS checked and enquired if other Local Authorities were also requesting a DBS check for their street traders. It was explained that at the present time there were no neighbouring authorities who were seeking traders comply with a DBS check.

It was commented that Members felt seeking traders to comply with a DBS check was not good practise at this time and asked Officers seek additional legal advice as there did not appear to be enough evidence to warrant this policy being required.

The Committee heard from the Licensing Manager who explained the policy had been drafted from a safety perspective. It was commented Members felt the draft policy was respectable however still required a little work and suggested that the elements of Public Health (healthy eating), Sexual and criminal exploitation training and DBS Check be removed from policy.

The following was suggested and agreed as an amended recommendation:

To consider the comments received during the consultation period and agree for the policy as in Appendix 1 to take effect from 1st April 2023, subject to removing the elements of Public Health (healthy eating), sexual and criminal exploitation training and DBS checks.

RESOLVED:

To consider the comments received during the consultation period and agree for the policy as in Appendix 1 to take effect from 1st April 2023, subject to removing the elements of Public Health (healthy eating), sexual and criminal exploitation training and DBS checks.

10. Setting of Licensing Fees 2023/2024

The Licensing Manager introduced the report at pages 27 to 48 of the agenda.

Discussions were had on the proposed increase to the taxi licence fees which hadn't been increased since 2015. Members heard that the fees were not increased at the last setting of the licensing fees due the taxi trade still recovering from Covid 19 and so the increase was in line with other raises and still on a cost recovery basis.

RESOLVED:

To consider the consultation responses received and agree the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 3 for the 2023- 2024 financial year.

11. Taxi Licensing Policy- Language Proficiency Update

The Licensing Manager presented the report at pages 49 to 54 of the agenda.

Following debates from the Committee, the Licensing Manager explained that all drivers were required to complete the Knowledge Test, including when renewing their licence.

It was explained that there was no cost for the assessment, which would only take 10minutes to complete and would be included as part of the Knowledge Test for new drivers in the form of written and/or oral questions.

The Chair of the Committee suggested the following as an additional recommendation:

That Officers seek legal advice as to whether a British National is required to complete the language proficiency requirement of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Licensing Committee agrees to amend Appendix E of the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy, as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.**
- 2. That Officers seek legal advice as to whether a British National is required to complete the language proficiency requirement of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.**

The meeting finished at 8.40pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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