

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 1
SEPTEMBER 2011, AT 5.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M McMullen (Chairman).
Councillors W Ashley, P Ballam, E Bedford,
E Buckmaster, Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton,
J Demonti, N Poulton, J Taylor, A Warman,
B Wrangles and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bevan	- Committee Secretary
Paul Newman	- Interim Licensing Manager
Brian Simmonds	- Head of Community Safety

253 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Beeching, A Burlton and N Wilson. It was noted that Councillor P Ruffles was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor R Beeching.

254 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the deletion of “further” from (A) of Minute 214 page 251 and the insertion of “additional”.

255 DELEGATING OF ALL NON STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TO A TAXI LICENSING PANEL

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on delegation of non-statutory taxi licensing decisions to a Licensing Panel.

The Head of Community Safety and Environmental Health explained that he had been asked to make savings and introducing a Panel instead of the Licensing Sub-Committee to consider matters concerning taxi drivers would help towards this. He said East Herts considered a high percentage of such cases at committee compared with some nearby Councils.

The Chairman pointed out that about 300 applications were processed by the Licensing section every year. In approximately 4 years only about 60 cases had been considered by committee. He felt this was a small percentage.

Members raised a number of concerns including the following matters.

They said that East Herts was a much larger District than other ones nearby and this made the situation different in East Herts. It contained a number of towns with different circumstances.

They wanted further details of the exact savings which could be achieved by setting up a panel.

They were also concerned that the public perception was that elected representatives took decisions on these matters. In addition, hearing from the applicants in person sometimes gave a better understanding of their situation.

Members decided that they preferred a panel including the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, a trained Member of the Licensing Committee on a rotational basis and a representative of the Director of Neighbourhood Services. They asked that the panel include a female Councillor or Officer where appropriate e.g. offences of a sexual nature.

The Committee decided on a Panel as now detailed.

RESOLVED that - (A) a financial breakdown of the costs of Licensing Sub-Committees and income from fees be provided;

(B) a Licensing Selection Panel be set up consisting of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, a trained Member of the Licensing Committee on a rotational basis and a representative of the Director of Neighbourhood Services;

(C) the Licensing Selection Panel review which taxi applications should be considered by a Licensing Sub-Committee or be delegated to Officers for approval or refusal for a period up to April 2012; and

(B) the financial situation and operation of the Panel be reviewed at the end of the initial period.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm

Chairman
Date