

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 17 JULY 2014,
AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor R Beeching (Chairman)
Councillors P Ballam, E Bedford,
E Buckmaster, Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton,
Mrs D Hone, J Jones, M McMullen,
P Ruffles, J Taylor and A Warman.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews and G Cutting.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robin Clark	- Enforcement Manager
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Oliver Rawlings	- Senior Specialist Licensing Officer
Brian Simmonds	- Head of Community Safety and Health Services

116 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor E Bedford and seconded by Councillor E Buckmaster that Councillor M McMullen be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor M McMullen was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor M McMullen be appointed Vice–Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the 2014/15 civic year.

117 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors W Ashley and B Wrangles.

118 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members of the four licensing objectives at the heart of the Council's Licensing Policy and suggested that further consideration should be given to the public health dimension and in particular, alcohol abuse. He referred to various statistics on the costs of alcohol abuse and the strain posed on health services, as well as the impact on community disorder.

The Chairman stated that he had discussed the issue with Officers and their view was that the Licensing policy could be improved. Therefore, he suggested that a small working group of Officers be tasked with reviewing the policy and reporting back to the Committee. The Chairman invited Members to comment and there was general support for this approach.

119 MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

120 LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2014, 21 MARCH 2014, 25 APRIL 2014, 16 JUNE 2014, 4 JULY 2014 AND 11 JULY 2014

In respect of Minute 7 – Objection Notice to an application to vary a premises licence at the Old Bell, Sawbridgeworth, which had been considered by the Licensing Sub-Committee

meeting held on 4 July 2014, Councillor J Jones expressed concern that the decision taken by Members had been impacted by the lack of police evidence. Officers advised that the issue had already been raised with the police and undertook to relay Members' concerns to the police.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meetings held on 17 March, 21 March, 25 April, 16 June and 4 July 2014, be received.

121 RESULTS OF WORKSHOPS TO ENGAGE WITH THE EAST HERTS LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE TRADE

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that detailed the results of the engagement exercise that had been conducted with the East Herts hackney carriage and private hire drivers, proprietors and operators.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Officers for producing such an excellent report.

The licence holders had raised a number of issues at the workshops as follows:

- Ranks
- Enforcement
- Taxi Marshals
- Knowledge test
- Limiting number of vehicles
- Fares
- Licensing points scheme
- Policy issues

The Committee considered all the points raised, as summarised in the report now submitted. Members gave consideration to those issues they believed should go out for full consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire licence holders, operators and other stakeholders.

The Committee also considered which issues should be looked at further by Officers.

The Committee agreed that full consultation should be undertaken on the suggestions that the knowledge test should be made harder and that private hire applicants should have to sit one. It was also agreed that the consultation should include the issue of advertising on vehicles.

In respect of the suggestions on ranks, Officers were requested to consider the suggestions made, except for the one relating to the pedestrianised part of Railway Street, which was not supported by Members.

The Committee also requested that Officers review the licensing points scheme.

The Committee approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) full consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire licence holders, operators and other stakeholders be undertaken in respect of the knowledge test and advertising on vehicles as now detailed;

(B) Officers be requested to review the suggestions made on ranks and the licensing points scheme as now detailed; and

(C) following the full consultation in (A) above, the Head of Community Safety and Health Services be authorised to implement any policy changes in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

122 REPORT ON LICENSING ACTIVITY – QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 OF 2014

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a

report providing an update on processing licences, enforcement activity and the implementation of the Service Plan for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2014.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

123 ATTENDANCE AT LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report detailing Members’ attendance at Licensing Sub-Committees including those attending as observers.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

The meeting closed at 6.12 pm

Chairman
Date