

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY
2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)
Councillors P Ballam, Mrs R Cheswright,
K Crofton, B Deering, J Jones, M McMullen,
T Page, M Stevenson and N Symonds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Oliver Rawlings	- Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement)

368 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of
Councillor G Cutting.

369 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the East Herts convictions
policy and he commented that a number of Authorities
had used this document as a basis for new convictions
policies. He referred to mandatory driver training for

new and existing drivers and commented on the new driver proficiency test being linked to the convictions policy. He emphasised that the proficiency test had replaced the testing previously carried out by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

The Chairman advised that the Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement) had been providing valuable advice in assisting Broxbourne Borough Council and Watford Borough Council with licensing policy documents. Members were advised that the Licensing Record Points Scheme had been updated in 2017 and the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles was being encouraged in that licences for such vehicles would be free in the first year and a 50% renewal discount would be applied.

The Chairman stated that the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) had provided substantial assurance that effective controls were in place to ensure risk management. He referred to the night time economy position statement and commented on the first increase in taxis fares in 7 years.

Members were reminded that a review of fees and charges had been completed and all previous licences had been inspected. The Council had also approved a revised statement of gambling policy. The Chairman commented on the fact that full electric vehicle taxis would be licensed for free in East Herts in 2019/20.

Members were reminded by the Chairman of the more assertive stance being taken towards Taxi Drivers by Members serving on the Licensing Sub-Committee. He

referred to a number of recent Magistrate's court judgements and stated that more licences had been revoked since 2016 than had been revoked in the last 10 years. A joint convictions policy with other Local Authorities was being worked on and Officers were working hard to oversee the process of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and also Taxi Driver medicals.

The Chairman advised that 86 new applicants had taken the knowledge test and there were 300 driver renewals due in 2019 so it was a busy year for licensing. He referred to the new emissions policy and commented on the lack of joined up working on this topic.

The Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement) advised of East Herts involvement in the Herts 2025 project. This involves a 3 month trial for electric vehicles with charging infrastructure being put in place as part of the scheme. The Chairman commented on the range of electric vehicles when compared to the likely daily mileage of taxis in East Herts.

Members had a general discussion in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles and the practicalities of electric vehicles being used as taxis in East Herts.

370 MINUTES - 14 NOVEMBER 2018

Councillor J Jones proposed and Councillor P Ballam seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to

the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

371 CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO DRAFT VEHICLE AGE AND EMISSION POLICY

The Head of Housing and Health submitted a report that presented the responses to the draft vehicle age and emissions policy. The Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement) advised that Members were being asked to endorse the final wording for approval by Council.

The Service Manager advised that 4 consultation responses had been received. 3 of these responses had been from the licensed trade which represented less than a 1% response rate. The first 2 responses had been from licensed dual drivers.

The Service Manager referred to the Euro 4, 5 and 6 emission standards. Members were advised that the Euro 6 standards had been introduced in 2014. The Service Manager summarised the consultation responses for Members and advised that no significant amendments were suggested to the draft policy.

Members were advised that some of the exception criteria had been deleted from the policy and this should benefit the licensed trade and the Council as Licensing Authority. The Service Manager stated that

the final consultation response had been from a resident of Bishop's Stortford who lived within one of the districts Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The resident had been supportive of the policy.

Councillor T Page commented on whether Officers had considered a possible unintended consequence of Members of the licensed trade deserting East Herts and there being a shortage of drivers as a result of the policy.

The Service Manager advised that a majority of the fleet would be compliant aside from the very oldest vehicles. He believed that there would be enough vehicles to cover the District in the unlikely event of a percentage of the currently licensed vehicles were not renewed.

The Service Manager acknowledged a vote of thanks from Members for the diligent and hard work carried out by Licensing Officers. Councillor D Andrews proposed and Councillor J Jones seconded, a motion that the final wording of the Draft Vehicle Age and Emissions Policy be endorsed and recommended to Council for approval. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. Members unanimously supported the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the consultation responses received in respect of the draft Vehicle Age and Emissions Policy be noted;

(B) the draft Vehicle Age and Emissions Policy

be endorsed; and

(B) the final wording be recommended to Council for approval.

The meeting closed at 7.46 pm

Chairman
Date