

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## GENERAL PURPOSES MINUTES

**Date: Wednesday 14 January 2009**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

**Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

**Present:** Councillors P D Kissane (Chair), C Latif (Vice Chair), P Gallagher, M Notley, J Pickersgill, L. Strange, P Stuart, J Thomas and B Underwood

Agenda Item:

**5**

**In Attendance:**

**Start/End Time:** Start Time: 6.00 pm  
End Time: 6.51 pm

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence had been submitted on behalf of Councillors M. Cherney-Craw, L. Knight, J. Lloyd, CC and L. Martin-Haugh.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 MINUTES - 4 NOVEMBER 2008**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday, 4 November 2008, having been circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **3 LG(MP)A 1976 - COMPLIANCE TEST FEE INCREASE**

The Chair informed the meeting that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the objections received following the consultation exercise on the proposal to increase the fees for the compliance tests.

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing introduced the report. She advised the Committee that the fees for compliance testing were last reviewed in the financial year 2004/05, and that the proposal for an increase was advertised in the Comet on 20 November 2008 with a closing date for objections to be lodged by 18 December 2008. The Officer went through the report, referring Members to the three objections received, the Contracts Manager's reasons for requesting an increase and the schedule on cancellation fees.

The Chair invited Mr Colin Hunt, a representative of the Stevenage Cab Trade Association to address the meeting.

Mr Hunt raised the following issues:

- The proposal to increase the compliance test fee did not offer members an MOT certificate;
- The rate of increase to the compliance test fee was particularly high especially in the present economic climate;
- That since the Cavendish Road site was incapable of meeting the Trade's requirement, whether drivers could be allowed the freedom to use alternative facilities which provided similar service and at a fairer price;
- That Trade members had experienced problems when booking in vehicles for tests at this site; and
- That the increment to the fee was simply to pay the wages of mechanics employed at the site.

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing responded to the issues raised. She said that the current compliance test fee is lower than that charged by other authorities, that SBC was not duty bound to provide MOT services. She advised Members that legislation enabled any authority to recover the costs of licensing in relation to the enforcement of vehicle licensing, which includes the compliance tests, and that fees collected were ring fenced and not used to pay staff. Finally she informed Members that the Council was not meeting its running costs, thus the service was presently being subsidised by the council tax payers.

The Officer advised the meeting of the following options: to amend the compliance test fee as requested, or to amend the fee by a lesser or greater amount than requested and to make no change to the current fee.

Following a full discussion on the matter it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the compliance test fee be increased from £40 to £45;
2. That the cancellation/refund fee as noted in the report be introduced; and
3. That Officers seek alternative means of providing both MOT and Compliance Tests.

#### **4 URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None

#### **5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Noted

#### **6 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None