

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 22 October 2013

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors D Kissane (Chair), C Latif (Vice Chair), L Chester, M Gardner, L Harrington, J Lloyd CC, M Notley, G Snell and V Warwick.

Also Present: 1 member of the public who left after Item 6.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
End Time: 6.35 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Hurst, L Martin-Haugh and B Underwood.

The Committee sent its best wishes to Councillor Underwood.

There were no declarations of interest.

With the agreement of the Chair Item 6, 'Changes to Street Trading Areas', was dealt with after Item 3.

2. MINUTES – 19 JULY 2013

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19 July 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. PROCEDURE NOTE

It was **RESOLVED** that the procedure note be noted.

4. THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING CONVICTIONS POLICY

The Committee had before it a report seeking approval for the Council's draft Policy on Convictions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing and which detailed the results of the recent consultation on the draft policy.

The Committee was advised that the consultation period had run from 24 June to 16 September 2013 and that no comments had been received.

In reply to a question the Committee was advised that the anticipated date of the introduction of the revised policy would be 2 January 2014.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Policy on Convictions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing (attached at Appendix A to the report) be recommended to Council for approval.

5. TAXI LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee received a report requesting that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees and charges set by the authority be reviewed.

The Committee was advised that any increases in fees and charges could not be applied retrospectively.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that the Council was not allowed to make a profit from its fees and charges regime and that implementation of the new scale of charges would stop the service having to be underwritten by the General Fund.

A Member expressed concerns that the increase in fees for the Spoken English Test could alienate potential taxi drivers for whom English was not their first language. The Committee was advised that the revised fee accurately reflected the cost to the Council of providing the test and that it was considered essential from a safety perspective that drivers had an adequate grasp of the English language.

In reply to a further question the Committee was advised that, if representations were received that they would be brought before the Committee no later than 2 months after the advertisement was placed, and that the fees would then take effect, but no later than 1 January 2014 dependant on the results of the consultation exercise. Should any comments be received the report would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the revised schedule of fees and charges (shown at Appendix 1 to the report) be agreed.
2. That a consultation period with the trade be undertaken for a period of 28 days.

6. CHANGES TO STREET TRADING AREAS

This item was dealt with after Item 3.

The Committee had before it a report seeking agreement for proposals for a change to the street trading regime and requesting that it be noted that a formal consultation had been undertaken regarding the proposal.

The Officer drew the Committee's attention to a typographical error in the report and advised that the date of the report should read 22 October 2013.

The Committee was advised that the consultation had resulted in no objections being received from anybody consulted, the Police or Herts Highways.

In reply to a question regarding implementation of the changes the Committee was advised that the agreed proposals would be advertised in the local press for two consecutive weeks and would be implemented within 28 days of the original agreement.

In reply to concerns about increased levels of pedestrian traffic in Basils Road and access to the Cromwell Hotel the Committee was advised that the proposals had been fully consulted with Herts Highways and the Council's engineers and that no objections to the scheme had been received.

The Committee was further advised that the proposal did not deal with the management of the market and that any safety issues arising would be dealt with by the appropriate committee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the proposals for a change to the street trading regime be agreed.
2. That it be noted that formal consultation had been undertaken regarding the proposed modification of the Street Trading regime.

7. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

The Licensing Manager advised the Committee that a notice had been received from East Herts Council regarding the offer of a half day seminar of the impact of alcohol on health. No other details had been received. Members were invited to express an interest to the Licensing Manager.

Members were further advised that the Taxi Driver hearing scheduled for 2 p.m. on Thursday 24 October had been switched to the Council Chamber.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by SI2006 No.88.
2. That, having considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II, it was agreed that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure

PART II

9. MINUTES – 19 JULY 2013

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19 July 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

Chair