

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday 11 September 2014

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Autun Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors D Kissane (Chair), C Latif (Vice Chair), D Bainbride, E Connolly, L Harrington, A McGuinness, M Notley, H Tessier and V Warwick.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
End Time: 7.15 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillors L Chester, J Lloyd CC and C Saunders.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. TO APPOINT THE VICE CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the post of the Vice Chair.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor C Latif be appointed as the Vice Chair for the current Municipal year 2014/15.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

4. MINUTES - 17 DECEMBER 2013

It was Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 17 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PROCEDURE NOTE

Noted

6. REVIEW OF POLICY ON LIMITING HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE NUMBERS

The Committee received a presentation by Ian Millership of CTS Traffic and Transportation with regards to the unmet demand survey for hackney carriage and rank provision and also to review the Council's current policy of limiting Hackney Carriage Vehicle (HCV) licence numbers.

Mr Millership informed the Committee that commuters at the rail station, members of the public, interested stake holders and members of the trade were consulted and the following views were expressed:

- That there was no evidence of significant unmet demand
- Removing the limit could lead to a congestion at the rank outside the main rail station
- Options for further rank development in Town centre, Old Stevenage and at station
- Need to liaise with new franchise at the station

The Chair thanked Mr Ian Millership for his presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** that

1. The current limit of 100 hackney carriage vehicles and licences be approved.
2. The recommendations regarding rank provision set out in paragraphs 3.11-3.14 be approved

7. ADOPTION OF POLICY AND CONDITIONS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

The Committee considered a report on the revised policy and conditions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing.

The Head of Leisure, Environment Health and Children's Services informed Members that at the previous meeting on 17 December 2013, it was agreed that Officers undertake a 12 week consultation, which took place between 19 December 2013 and 14 March 2014. He highlighted that issues in the report such as private hire vehicle signage and the exemption procedure; Language (English and knowledge) tests and checks regarding right to work concerning applicants on student visas have all been updated to reflect latest developments and legislation.

The Environmental Health Manager advised Member that although signage had been introduced since 2009, drivers main concern lies with the length of time involved in applying for exemptions from the local authority as this leads to drivers not being able to undertake executive type of work. The Officer advised that an additional recommendation which would remove the requirement for drivers to request for exemption was being put before the committee for consideration.

With regards to signage on private hire vehicles, Members were informed that drivers could now use sticky or magnetic SBC signs on both sides of their vehicles (driver and passenger front doors).

Mr Barry Milne was invited to make representations to the Committee. Mr Milne indicated that generally members of the trade do welcome the issue of signage but there is concern that by placing these signs on the front doors it would confuse consumers who have requested for a particular company.

The Officer in response advised that the local authority had a duty to comply with legislation and the safety of the public was of paramount importance and nothing

prevented taxi firms from displaying their own larger signs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised policy and conditions of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing be adopted subject to a relaxation of a condition requiring drivers undertaking executive work to seek an exemption with the licensing authority and that it would be the drivers discretion whether or not they used an adhesive fixed sign or that of a magnetic version.

8. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

The Head of Leisure, Environmental Health and Children's Services Members informed the Committee that a new Commercial and Licensing Manager had now been appointed with responsibility on Licensing and Commercial issues.

The Committee welcomed a suggestion that both external and in house training would be available to any member of the Committee interested.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

None

PART II

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

Chair