

## Minutes of Licensing Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 14 June 2011 starting at 6.30pm  
Present: Councillor J Alcock (Chairman)

Councillors:

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| P Ainsworth     | J Holgate |
| S Brunskill     | S Knox    |
| P Dowson        | R Moores  |
| R Hargreaves    | G Scott   |
| K Hind (7.03pm) | M Thomas  |

In attendance: Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Also in attendance: Councillor R Newmark.

### 102 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Bartrop, C Ross and R Swarbrick.

### 103 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

### 105 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

### 106 REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no references from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 107 BRIEFING ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave Members of the Committee a briefing on the work of the Committee, which divided mainly between liquor licensing and taxi licensing. She did point out that the Committee did have other licensing responsibilities for gambling and some other minor areas.

She explained how the Committee dealt with liquor licensing applications mainly through sub-committees which heard applications and appeals. Training would be given and she encouraged all Members to take part in this element of the Committee's work.

She then went on to explain how the liquor licensing regime operated via a system of 'notices' (pale blue when posted on the premises) which were the responsibility of the applicant not the Council in terms of any applications.

Councillors could now make representations on individual applications which had not been the case previously. She also referred to a wealth of available literature which would help Members.

In respect of taxi licensing, she explained how the infringement point system worked, gave an insight into how to differentiate between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and explained the different operating conditions that both worked under. She also commented that officers were currently discussing with private hire and taxi drivers the viability of introducing a number of CCTV cameras for their vehicles.

The Chairman also commented on the operation of both licensing regimes and encouraged Members to take a full and active part.

108

#### LICENSING ADDITIONAL HACKNEY VEHICLES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services sought Committee's views in relation to licensing additional hackney vehicles which would be limited to vehicles which provided a service for users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

She reminded Members that the Council currently had a limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences which it issued. That decision should ideally be based on a survey which would in turn demonstrate there was no unmet demand for the provision of such services. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, the Council had not carried out such a survey, but had kept the provision of hackney carriage licences under regular review and had responded to requests for consideration of extra licences.

She further commented that the Council regularly receives complaints about the way in which hackney carriage ranks operate in town both from licence holders and from members of the public ie congestion, shortage of rank spaces.

The Council had recently been approached by an individual who wished to develop a specific business providing transport from nursing homes to hospitals to fulfil hospital appointments etc. This type of work could be carried out under the auspices of a private hire operators licence, however the individual concerned did not live within the Ribble Valley and therefore had no premises which would provide him with an operating base. However, the holder of hackney carriage vehicle did not require such an operating base.

She reminded Members that Committee had in the past allowed additional hackney plates where this provided an enhanced service, for example by expanding the number of vehicles which were accessible to wheelchairs users, particularly where the wheelchair user did not have to vacate the wheelchair. The current provision of accessible vehicles within the 53 hackney vehicles

licensed was being researched and full information would be available for Committee. She reminded Members that the Council stance on a limit on the number of hackney vehicles was supported by the Local Hackney Association and was compatible with the experience of users of the rank, both licence holders, customers and local residents. Members were therefore asked to consider whether they wished to seek funding for the survey or whether they were satisfied that a survey would not be an appropriate use of public funds and whether they considered that current arrangements operated for the benefit of licence holders and local residents.

Members then discussed this matter in some detail.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee does not see the need for a survey as it would be an inappropriate use of public funds in the current financial climate;
2. consider the Council's arrangements operate for the benefit of licence holders and local residents alike as evidenced by the agreement of the Hackney Carriage Association and absence of complaints from the public; and
3. request the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to prepare a report for next Committee relating to current provision for disabled users to information about residents of the Ribble Valley who are disabled to ensure that there is proper provision.

The meeting closed at 7.17pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Diane Rice (414418).