

Agenda Item 9.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 JUNE 2015 FROM 7.05 PM TO 7.55 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring (Chairman), Malcolm Richards (Vice-Chairman), Michael Firmager, Mike Gore, Mike Haines, Philip Houldsworth, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Barrie Patman, Beth Rowland, Chris Singleton, Wayne Smith and Bill Soane

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor John Jarvis.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions received.

6. HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF REVIEW

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 7-16, detailing a proposed increase in charges to the existing tariff. An appendix to the report giving details of the existing Wokingham Borough Council tariffs, which had been omitted from the agenda, was tabled. It was noted that the Council had consulted 100 hackney carriage drivers and 73 had responded. The majority had indicated that they would like changes to the existing tariff.

The proposals from the trade included:

- a change in the flag rate from 836 yards to 704 yards or from 190 seconds to 150 seconds resulting in a fare increase of 15.8%.
- a change to the increment for journeys over the flag rate resulting in a fare increase of 12%.
- a change to the hour of Tariff 2 moving from 11pm to 10pm resulting in a fare increase of 21%.

Mr Leahy, Licensing Officer, advised the Committee that it was Wokingham Borough Council's policy to consult on tariff changes every 12 months. The Committee noted the changes proposed by some other local authorities and also that some had ceased to consult hackney carriage drivers on changes to the tariffs and in these cases, no proposals to increase the tariffs had been put forward.

The Committee noted that no business case had been put forward to support the case for increasing the tariff. The Committee were concerned about the detrimental impact on

residents and traders if tariff 2 was changed to start at 10pm from 11pm. The change could result in residents having to leave events early in order to avoid paying tariff 2 which might result in local traders losing custom.

The Committee resolved not to change the existing tariff due to having no evidence to justify the increase and the potential detrimental impact on residents and traders by allowing an increase. The Committee also asked that any future proposals from the trade should be supported by a business case.

RESOLVED: That no changes be made to the existing Hackney Carriage Tariff.

7. LICENSING UPDATE AND ANNUAL PLAN

The Committee received a report on the Licensing Update and Annual Plan, as set out on Agenda pages 17 to 22, which provided an update on the work of the Licensing Team.

The Committee noted that the Licensing Team were in the process of reviewing all procedures with a view to streamlining the service and thereby making it more efficient. It was noted that the change in legislation, which abolished the requirement to renew personal licences, would result in a loss of revenue of around £59,200. The Finance Team were aware of this potential shortfall and had accordingly made adjustments to the budget. It was however noted that any member of the public could ask for a premises licence to be reviewed if they believed a breach of the licence had taken place.

RESOLVED: That the Licensing Update and Annual Plan be noted.

8. HEARINGS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, as set on Agenda pages 23 to 24, which gave an update on the outcome of appeals heard since the previous meeting of 16th September 2014.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report be noted.