

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2015 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.00 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

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

**Officers in attendance**

Luciane Bowker, Democratic Services Officer  
Yvonne Jones, Licensing Officer  
Julia O'Brien, Principal Licensing Officer

**15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**16. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Barrie Patman.

**17. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

**18. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

**19. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

**20. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES REVIEW**

The Committee received a report set out on Agenda pages 7-40 containing the Gambling Act Statement of Principles draft policy for consideration and the results from the consultation exercise undertaken during September and October 2015. The Committee had initially considered the draft policy at its meeting on 15 September 2015 and this was a second review of the report with the addition of the consultation results.

Julia O'Brien, Principal Environmental Health Officer stated that only three consultation responses had been received from: Campaign for Fairer Gambling; Woodley Parish Council and Field Seymour Parkes Solicitors. Julia informed that there had been no need to amend the draft document as a result of the consultation. Consequently the document remained the same as it had been at the September meeting.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made:

- Some Members felt anxious about children being allowed into Bingo premises. They were reassured that where that was the case the gaming machines which attracted children would be strategically positioned to enable staff to monitor their use. Alternatively, these machines could be placed in a secluded area;
- It was pointed out that gaming machines issued vouchers to redeem cash, so it was unlikely that children would be encouraged to use them;

- Members emphasized that gambling premises should be encouraged to collaborate to the MASH System (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). This was a system of gathering information from different sources into a central hub for analysis.
- Julia stated that most premises already held incident books and could be encouraged to contribute to MASH by inspectors;
- Default opening hours were given to current licenses but there was an opportunity to reconsider opening hours when renewing licenses;
- Underage testing could be done through Trading Standards and it was the Officers intention to carry out such tests in the future;
- In response to a question Julia stated that there was no legal requirement on minimum staff numbers in betting shops and at the moment there was no evidence of a need to review it;
- Wokingham Borough did not have a high number of betting premises and the Police had not raised concerns relating to gambling activity in the Borough.

**RESOLVED** That: The Committee agreed and recommended the Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles for adoption by the Council.

## **21. CHANGES TO INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee received a report set out in Agenda pages 41-44 reviewing the current requirements for vehicle testing and inspection in Wokingham Borough.

Yvonne Jones, Licensing Officer explained that the current level of testing carried out by Wokingham Borough Council had fallen below the Government MOT standards. The report proposed to implement a new system by which vehicles would be required to have the Government MOT as well as an additional inspection by Wokingham Borough Council at nominated garages on first licensing and on renewal.

The following changes were also proposed:

- Vehicles from 6-8 years would require an interim MOT at six months;
- Vehicles over 8 years old would require an additional MOT which equated to three per year.

Yvonne pointed out that the Licensing Service did not get involved in setting the fees charged by garages, but it was hoped that the new system would be more cost effective as garages may decide to offer deals for combined Government MOT and inspections at the same time. It was expected that the market forces would regulate the fees accordingly.

Yvonne clarified that Wokingham inspections were not a duplication of MOT as it tested specific things not included in regular MOT tests such as meters and ramps. Members were informed that there were four garages registered to do inspections at the moment, but more garages would be contacted if the new system was agreed. Yvonne stated that under the policy only Wokingham garages could be nominated for inspections.

Yvonne noted that a more vigorous testing would translate into safer and more reliable vehicles to serving the public.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made:

- There was sensitivity to the fact that drivers may have an increased cost if having to submit their vehicles to additional MOTs and inspections in the same year;

- Inspection forms would be reviewed following agreement to the new system;
- Hackney carriages could be up to 15 years old, so potentially many drivers may be affected by this change;
- Inspection charges were tax deductible;
- It was important to ensure the safety of vehicles being used by the public;
- When tariffs were changed drivers were requested to collect their cards at the Council and failure to do so would result in a suspension of the license;
- Modern meters were sealed and it was very difficult to tamper with them.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1) The Committee agreed to the implementation of a testing regime to include:
  - a) Government MOT's with an additional inspection on first licensing;
  - b) Government MOT's with an additional inspection on renewal.
- 2) No consultation was required.

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