

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICENSING MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Wednesday, 12 February 2020 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor K James (Chair)

 Councillors C Bright, M Clarke, P Hackett, P Hames,
 D McGeough and R Wiseman

ALSO PRESENT C Norman - Solicitor
 C Parkhouse - Lead Licensing Officer
 K Brown - Democratic Services Officer

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor McKenzie.

43. MINUTES

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 5, Abstention 2)

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

45. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Clarke and –

Resolved:

That the Agenda Item Part II be discussed when reached on the Agenda.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

46. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters.

47. REVIEW OF TAXI FARES

The Lead Licensing Officer presented the report.

The National Hackney Table was circulated to the group which showed the fares of a two mile journeys across the country. No comparison between cities and rural areas could be made considering the difference in journeys type.

A brief discussion then followed which included three members of the taxi liaison committee who were also present at the meeting.

There were three recommendations on the report and the following votes were taken:

- It was proposed by Councillor Hackett, seconded by Councillor Clarke and –

Resolved:

That the Taxi Fares be increased.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

- It was proposed by Councillor Hackett, seconded Councillor Clarke and –

Resolved:

That the Taxi Fares be increased by option B in table 1 on the report.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

- It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded Councillor Clarke and –

Resolved:

That the proposed fares be advertised for a period of 14 days as required by s.65(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; and provided there are no objections, the proposed fares be introduced on 1st April 2020.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

48. TAXIS - CLIMATE CHANGE

A verbal update was received from the Lead Licensing Officer who confirmed that this is a standing item on the Agenda.

Climate Change Working Group are putting together a Carbon Plan and Councillor Hames confirmed that previous discussions on the Carbon Reduction Plan has included Taxis.

Councillor James referred to the Notice of Motion already taken to Full Council with regards to charging bays for Electric Vehicles. This is something the Authority would have to work together with Devon County Council and within the town re-generation this would be considered.

The Lead Licensing Officer confirmed that the Taxi Policy is due to be reviewed this year and a long term plan for greener vehicles would be considered within the review to fit with the infrastructure.

Climate Change is always on the forward plan for discussion however need to look for report rather than just a discussion.

Councillor Hames suggested Taxis be an agenda item on the Climate Change Working Group meeting at the end of the month.

The members of the taxi liaison committee left at 10.26am.

49. ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING

A verbal update was received from the Lead Licensing Officer which included a PowerPoint presentation.

The new Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(England) Regulations 2018 came into effect on 1 October 2018 and replaced a number of previous acts.

Licensable Activities now include:

- Selling animals
- Dog and cat boarding
- Hiring out horses
- Breeding dogs
- Keeping or training animals for exhibition – previously Devon County Council responsibility.

There are 5 main changes:

- One generic licence for all activities
- Generic and activity specific conditions – set by DEFRA
- Minimum and higher standards
- Risk Rating Scheme – star rated

- 1, 2 or 3 year licences

The Risk Rating Scheme has 1, 3 and 5 star rating for low risk and 1, 2 and 4 star for higher risk. Depending on which star is awarded depends on how long a licence is. The higher the star the longer the licence.

The presentation also listed the amount different establishments we have across the district.

New legislation comes into effect on 6 April 2020 with regards to third party sales of puppies and kittens.

All of the above is with regards to businesses meeting the business test.

Legislation on Dangerous Wild Animals and Zoos remains the same.

A brief discussion took place which included breeding – the difficulties in proving it is a business, boarding – both home and kennels with regards to star ratings. The Lead Licensing Officer gave examples of higher standards requirements.

Councillor Hackett declared an interest as he works with the British Horse Society as an Access Officer and has an involvement with a local racing trainer. He feels this new legislation puts extra pressure on the Authority.

The Lead Licensing Officer advised there had been difficulties across Devon with interpretation and consistency. A working group consisting of officers from all Devon Authorities had been established and had written to DEFRA for clarification on certain issues. Councillor Hames suggested that the Licensing Committee could petition DEFRA or local MPs. The Lead Licensing Officer suggested this is revisited in approximately 6 months if no response had been received from DEFRA.

50. TAXI DRIVERS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Verbal confirmation from Lead Licensing Officer was received stating that no meeting has been held and this is a standing item on the Agenda.

51. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted and nothing to add.

52. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor James , seconded by Councillor Wiseman and –

Resolved: That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 and Paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

53. INCIDENTS IN PUBLIC HOUSES

The Lead Licensing Officer circulated a summary of incidents that had been reported to the Authority. Discussion took place regarding the figures provided. The Lead Licensing Officer confirmed this information had been received from the Police Licensing Officer. The figures only included incidents that could be attributable to particular licensed premises. There could be other incidents in and around the Town Centre that could not be associated directly to licensed premises. It was confirmed that licensed premises should have an incident book to record any incidents on the premises and the book is checked during inspections. The Lead Licensing Officer confirmed if Councillors were to receive complaints they should direct the complainant to report it to the Licensing Team. If it was in respect of violence or other crimes then it should be reported to the Police via 101 if non urgent.

54. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved: That the press and public be readmitted.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

The meeting commenced at 10am and closed at 11:14am

Chair:

Date: