

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

held on 5 October 2021  
Present:

Cllr R N Leach (Chairman)

Cllr M A Bridgeman  
Cllr G W Elson  
Cllr K Howard

Cllr I Johnson  
Cllr L M N Morales

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee held on 15 June 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ali, J Brown, S Dorsett and D Harlow.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

**5. TRAINING ON ALCOHOL LICENSING**

The Committee was advised that an external provider was being explored for the provision of training on Alcohol Licensing, noting the excellent sessions previously received on Taxi Licensing. It was stated that this would be arranged in the future, for example as part of the annual Licensing Training scheduled for the start of each Municipal Year.

**6. REVIEW OF LICENSING POLICY**

The Committee received the Council's Licensing Policy which had previously been approved in 2016 for a five year period. Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer, reported that the Policy had been due for renewal prior to January 2021, however due to the

pandemic this had not been possible. No changes had been proposed to the current Policy and, if approved, it would be adopted for a further five years.

Members discussed paragraph 7.79 of the Policy in relation to the wording around the Saturation Policy and the presumption against granting of consent for Premises Licences within the area. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a short report at a future meeting on how the Saturation Policy affected current Licensing Policy in light of its introduction several years ago.

Following a question, Gareth John, Head of Legal Services, undertook to look into the wording of paragraph 7.7.2 which made reference to 'secondary shopping areas' and whether this should be 'secondary frontage' as per the Core Strategy / Woking Local Development Document. (NOTE: Following the meeting, it was clarified that 'secondary shopping area' was the correct reference as the term 'secondary frontage' was used to reference areas within the primary shopping area.)

The Committee welcomed the Licensing Policy and agreed a number of changes as set out below.

There were typographical errors in paragraph 15.1 where the length of the Policy should read five years and not three years, and in the title of point 3.0 where 'Strategy' was misspelled.

It was agreed that section 6.0 be re-titled 'Promotion of equality'; the end of paragraph 6.1 be amended to read '... between persons of different groups covered by the Equality Act 2010'; paragraph 6.2 change to 'Woking Borough Council has produced a Corporate Equality Scheme in accordance with the Equality Act 2010'; and the end of paragraph 6.3 should read, '...and the values, principles and standards set out in the Corporate Equality Scheme'.

It was further agreed that Points 7, 8, 9 and 10 (the four Licensing Objectives) would be better re-labelled as sub points 7. a), 7. b), 7.c) and 7. d), with the subsequent points renumbered and cross-references amended accordingly later in the document.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**That the Licensing Policy be adopted, as amended by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 5 October 2021.**

#### **7. PROPOSAL FOR THE EXTENSION OF DEADLINES RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Committee received a report on the proposed extension of deadlines relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing following the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Cobb reported that the deadlines related to academic training and vehicle specifications and that the proposed extensions would assist the drivers following the effects of the pandemic on the trade. In addition to the proposals set out in the report, a supplementary paper had been tabled regarding the provision of a further year to 31 March 2023 for Hackney Carriage drivers to ensure their vehicles met Woking's Hackney ULEV Policy, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Licensing.

The Chairman referred to the three proposals set out in section 4 of the report and asked the Committee for its views on the first, 'To give drivers a further year to complete the academic course, advancing the deadline from 31 March 2021 to 5 October 2022'. It was

noted that many providers now enabled the drivers to undertake the training online. Members were content with the proposal, subject to all drivers being advised that no further extension would be granted.

The Chairman asked Members for views on the remaining two proposals before the Committee, 'to give the Private Hire drivers a further year to ensure their vehicles meet the Euro Emissions Six requirements from 22 January 2022 to 22 January 2023' and 'to give the Hackney Carriage drivers a further year to ensure their vehicles meet Woking's Hackney Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Policy from 31 March 2022 to 31 March 2023'.

A discussion ensued as to whether the extensions should be agreed, noting that whilst the pandemic had caused a reduced level of income for the taxi drivers; the drivers had already received and been made aware of extensions in past years; and there would be climate change benefits from the taxi fleet meeting the emissions and ULEV standards. The Chairman stated that both sets of drivers should be treated the same and that the Committee was appreciative of the taxi services in the Borough be maintained during the pandemic. It was suggested that when contacting the drivers, the Licensing team could encourage them to upgrade to an electric vehicle.

Members of the Committee voted on whether to support the new extended deadlines as proposed by the Licensing Authority.

Total in favour – 3

Against – 2

Present but not voting – 1

The Committee therefore supported the two remaining deadlines as proposed by the Licensing Authority.

RESOLVED That the new extended deadlines as proposed by the Licensing Authority be permitted:

- (i) To give drivers a further year to complete the academic course, advancing the deadline from 31 March 2021 to 5 October 2022;
- (ii) to give the Private Hire drivers a further year to ensure their vehicles meet the Euro Emissions Six requirements from 22 January 2022 to 22 January 2023; and
- (iii) to give the Hackney Carriage drivers a further year to ensure their vehicles meet Woking's Hackney Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Policy from 31 March 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_