

**Durham County Council**

**General Licensing and Registration Committee**

At the **Meeting** of the **General Licensing and Registration Committee** held in **Committee Room 2** at **County Hall, Durham** on **Thursday 14 January 2010** at **10.00am**.

**Present:**

**Councillor C Carr** in the Chair

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors R Arthur, D Bowman, E Bell, D Boyes, J Chaplow, B Graham, K Holroyd, A Hopgood, J Hunter, P May, D Marshall, L Marshall, D Morgan, M Plews, R Rodgers, J Shiell, O Temple, L Thomson and R Todd.

**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Blakey, P Gittins, G Huntington, J Lee, R Liddle and D Stoker.

**A1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**A2 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**A3 Amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which asked the Committee to consider and agree a number of amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, a copy of which had been circulated.

Members were advised that since the adoption of the Policy on 1 April 2009 the Council had embarked on a major consultation process concerning the future control and regulation of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, licensed within the County of Durham.

In view of the substantial nature and potential impact of this, it was proposed that the first comprehensive review of the Policy be delayed but that some minor technical amendments be made.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the proposed amendments which related to the Vehicle Licence Conditions and to the Guidance on the Relevance of Convictions.

A copy of the revised Policy was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Councillor Hopgood referred to the delay in carrying out the comprehensive review of the Licensing Policy and asked what the proposed timeframe was for completion.

Members were advised that the consultation process on the future control and regulation of the hackney carriage and private hire trade was extensive, but the results were expected during this year. The review of the Policy would then be conducted on completion of this exercise.

## **RESOLVED**

That:

1. approval be granted to the delay in conducting the comprehensive review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy until the outcome of the consultation on the future regulation of the taxi trade in Durham is known;
2. the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed.

## **A4 Future Arrangements for the Licensing Committees**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which reported on the future arrangements for the delivery of the licensing functions of the Council, a copy of which had been circulated.

Members were provided with a copy of the report submitted to the Constitutional Working Group which reviewed the arrangements for the operation of the Council's Licensing Committees, and recommended the following options to Council for the delivery of the licensing functions for the next municipal year:-

- Removal of the requirement for local members to sit on local cases
- A reduction in the number of venues from six to two – Chester-le-Street and Spennymoor – with each meeting being held at the venue most suited to the business to be conducted at that meeting
- Sub-Committee meetings to be scheduled every fortnight
- Meetings to be held on a set day of the week
- Retention of 15 Members on the Statutory Licensing Committee
- Identification of a Panel of three Members plus a Chair or Vice-Chair for each scheduled Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee at the start of the Municipal Year

- Removal of the requirement for Members sitting on the Statutory Licensing Committee to automatically also sit on the General Licensing and Registration Committee
- Creation of three Sub-Committees of seven Members to sit with a Chair or Vice-Chair as a panel of eight Members, thereby creating a General Licensing and Registration Committee of 24 Members.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed arrangements for the Licensing Committees in the new Municipal Year, be noted.

#### **A5 Any Other Business**

A Member made reference to parking problems experienced by Members at some of the venues allocated for the licensing meetings. It was recognised that the number of venues used would be reduced to two in the new Municipal Year, however it was suggested that where there was likely to be a problem, car parking spaces be made available for Members/Officers on the scheduled dates of both the Statutory Licensing and Area General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committees.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.