

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
05 JULY 2007
(7.30pm - 8.55pm)

Present: Councillors Brunel-Walker, Baily, Mrs Barnard, Beadsley, Brossard, Burrows, Finch, Leake, Osborne, Mrs Ryder, Thompson and Virgo

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Blatchford and Kendall

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

5. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Licensing and Safety Committee of 19 April and 23 May 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Appointment of Licensing Panel Chairmen

The Committee was advised that following Annual Council there were two vacancies for Licensing Panel Chairman which needed to be appointed to.

RESOLVED that Councillors Beadsley and Thompson be appointed as Licensing Panel Chairmen for the 2007/08 municipal year.

7. Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan 2007-2008

The Committee considered a report which accompanied the finalised Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan 2007-2008 and proposed the adoption of the plan to meet statutory requirements. This had been considered in draft format at the Committee meeting of 1 February 2007

Members were advised that the Plan provided detailed information about inspection and enforcement action taken in 2006-2007, a work programme for 2007-2008 and key priorities for Health and Safety work for this period. In line with relevant guidance, all business premises within the Borough were inspected according to risk, with low risk premises completing self-assessment questionnaires and attending seminars as alternatives to routine inspections. Additionally, again in line with a Government drive to ease the burden of regulation on business, work detailed within the Plan included new educational and pro-active initiatives to encourage good practice within the Borough as well as partnership working with the Health and Safety Executive and local businesses to create "added value".

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (i) adopt the Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan for 2007-2008;
- (ii) note the focus on topic inspections and option of inspection strategies for low risk businesses to ensure resources are allocated to the areas of greatest risk/impact; and
- (iii) note the portfolio of joint working with the Health & Safety Executive designed to ease the burden on businesses in the Borough and to meet

the Health and Safety Commissioning (HSC) targets to improve health and safety by 2010.

8. Licensing Annual Report 2006-2007

The Committee considered a report of which detailed the activities of the Licensing function in the Environment and Leisure Department during 2006-2007. The Committee was asked to consider and comment upon the work carried out for this period.

The report included a breakdown of licences, registrations and permits issued or processed by the licensing section and details of work carried out around the issues of the Licensing Act 2005, the Gambling Act and Street and other Collection permits. Members sought and were provided with clarification of the two types of taxi license available and the issue of how direct debit mandates for charity collections were dealt with in the absence of any government regulation.

RESOLVED that the Committee receive this report.

9. Tariff Charges

The Committee considered a report which outlined the annual process undertaken to determine the fees charged (the tariff) by Hackney Carriages (Taxis) within Bracknell Forest. Members were advised that the current tariff came into effect in October 2006. Any changes needed to be considered now to ensure that the legislative requirements regarding the advertisement of proposed changes to tariffs, and the consideration of any objections, could be met prior to introduction in October 2007. The formula previously agreed with the taxi trade and used to establish increases in tariffs for the last eight years was used to calculate an increase for 2007-08. The resulting figure of less than 1% (0.84%) was considered by both the trade and the Council to be too low to introduce due to the costs which would be incurred to implement the increase for the reprogramming and testing of meters. Members were advised that in view of these circumstances, members of the trade had indicated that no increase would be the preferred option.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree not to implement a change in the tariff at this time.

10. Gambling Act 2005

The Committee was advised that the transition period for the Gambling Act was in place until 30 July, with a "go live" date of 1 September 2007. No Panel hearings had yet been required as all applications received and processed to date had been fast track applications which used the standard conditions. A second set of guidance on the Act had been issued and there was a training course available on 1 August 2007 in Maidenhead. Members were encouraged to attend and to advise Laura Driscoll if they wished to do so.

11. Licensing Act Policy Consultation

The Committee was advised that the Licensing Act Policy was currently being consulted upon. Some comments had already been received and the consultation period ran until 6 September. The outcome of the consultation and any consequence amendments made to the Licensing Act Policy would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee on 4 October 2007. The Policy would then be considered at full Council prior to publication by the end of 2007.

12. **Training of new Councillors**

The Committee was advised that due to staff illness, training for new Committee members had yet to be arranged. Members would be updated once arrangements had been put in place. The Chairman stressed that it was important that Members volunteer for forthcoming Licensing Panel dates if they were available to do so.

CHAIRMAN