

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2020
7.30 - 9.30 PM**



Present:

Councillors Porter, Brossard, Allen, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Finch, Ms Gaw, Gbadebo, Mrs Ingham, Kirke, Leake, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and Tullett

Also Present:

Councillor Temperton

1. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Porter be elected Chairman for the municipal year 2020/21.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Brossard be appointed Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2020/21.

3. Appointment of Licensing Panel - Sub Committee of Licensing and Safety Committee

RESOLVED that the Licensing Panel be established of any three Councillors drawn, as required, from the membership of the Licensing and Safety Committee.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kirke declared a professional association with the Home Office Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020 were approved as a correct record.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no Urgent Items of Business.

7. Notice of Public Speaking

There had been no notifications of Public Speaking.

8. Fees and Charges 2021/22

Members received the Fees and Charges 2021/22, which had been approved by the Joint Public Protection Committee.

It was noted that the fees for dog boarding had been amended since the Joint Public Protection Partnership at which the fees were endorsed in light of the discussion at that meeting, to reflect the difference in contractor rates and the various different types of animal welfare licences. The new fee had been circulated to the trade, and would now consist of the following (as set out in the tabled supplementary paper):

1 year licence (new) = £118 + £8.85 + £145 = £271.85

1 year licence (renewal) = £118 + £8.85 + £115 = £241.85

It was noted that the generic hourly rate of £57 had been agreed through a methodology based on the average officer time and costs incurred.

With the above amendment for the Home Boarder fees, it was **RESOLVED**:

- 1 That these fees set out at Appendix C go forward for consideration as part of the Council fee setting process except for the home boarding fees, which would be amended in light of the methodology and calculations outlined in response to public question from the Joint Public Protection Partnership (as tabled)
- 2 That the fees for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators are put forward for statutory consultation.
- 3 That the adjustments to the methodology at Appendix B for calculating fees for businesses licensed under Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 be agreed and be applied to 2020/21 and that the recommendations of the Joint Management Board (endorsed by JPPPC) with respect to Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Fees also set out at Appendix B be agreed

9. **Annual Report 2019/20**

Members received the Annual Report 2019/20 which outlined the work of the Public Protection Partnership in Bracknell Forest over the past year.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- COVID-19 had had a significant impact on the Licensing team and the whole Public Protection Partnership resulting in significantly increased workload. There had been a big increase in business as usual work, in addition to the pressure of COVID-19 workload supporting businesses and the licensed trade.
- The abbreviation SR stood for Service Request.
- Members thanked officers for their hard work supporting businesses.
- Where a business was reported to not be following COVID-19 legislation, officers would advise and work with the trade. Online events had been held ahead of any significant change to the rule for traders in Bracknell Forest. Compliance patrols focussed on advisory work.
- Officers were receiving queries around the legislation around holding certain types of events, and queries around new business plans where business owners were broadening their services.

10. **Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards**

Members received the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards report, which outlined suggested standards for Local Authorities to implement. It was noted that many standards were already in Bracknell Forest's Guidance notes, such as Disability and Safeguarding training for drivers.

Officers agreed to amend the existing Guidance Notes for Bracknell Forest and bring the revised version to Committee in the New Year for adoption.

In response to discussion, the following points were noted:

- Child Sexual Exploitation training was already in place, and drivers had been asked to complete the training by the end of the year. If a badge renewal was required before the end of the year, drivers would need to prove that they were booked onto a training session. Training would be refreshed on a three-year basis.
- It was noted that most Local Authorities had Safeguarding training in place for their taxi drivers.
- It was noted that the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme had been assessed, and there were a number of areas which would be adopted. PPP officers were working with Thames Valley Police with a view to accredit some Licensing officers under the scheme.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- 1 That Members note the content of the statutory standards
- 2 That Members agree to further reports detailing changes to conditions contained in the Guidance Notes and Conditions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Owners, Operators and Drivers to comply with the statutory standards

11. **Review of Statement of Licensing Policy**

Members received the Review of Statement of Licensing Policy report. The Licensing Act 2003 required Local Authorities to review their Statement of Licensing Policy every 5 years, and Bracknell Forest was required to have a new Statement in place by the end of January 2021.

The existing Statement had been reviewed by officers and would be put out to consultation prior to adoption by full Council in January 2021. The Licensing and Safety Committee would be asked to endorse the new Statement at an extraordinary meeting in December 2020 following the close of consultation.

Arising from discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that

- 1 the Statement of Licensing Policy set out in Annex A to this report is approved as a consultation policy
- 2 officers be instructed to begin consultation
- 3 on conclusion of consultation, the matter to return for consideration at a special meeting of the Committee in December 2020 prior to Council approval

12. **Taxi Liaison meeting update**

The Committee received an update from the Taxi Liaison meeting and from officers' engagement with the trade. Recent issues raised with Licensing officers included a need for increased communication with the trade in regards to COVID-19, and drivers had been encouraged to follow the Public Protection Partnership social media accounts for up to date updates.

Two virtual liaison meetings had been held on 23 July and 14 August 2020. At these meetings, the trade had requested a fare increase, mixed fleet for hackney carriages, a review of existing and new taxi ranks, and the alteration and subsidies of licensing fees. Officers had asked the trade for business cases around the fare increase and mixed fleet matters, but none had been received yet.

The trade had submitted an email request to officers attached at Annex A of the Committee report.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- 1 the content of the report and minutes attached be noted and;
- 2 any recommendations on matters discussed or for further discussion in the future of the Group be made.

13. **Urgent delegated decisions**

The Chairman advised Committee members of an Urgent delegated decision taken in conjunction with the relevant officer from the Public Protection Partnership to vary the licence condition 14.1 for 6 monthly taxi vehicle inspections. The decision had been taken during and because of the COVID-19 crisis, and in the absence of a Committee meeting. The variation was to grant a 6-month extension to 6-monthly inspections due between 24 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 where the set conditions of the scheme are satisfied. The urgent delegated decision was made as a result of a direct request from the trade as most taxis had done little mileage during COVID lockdown. The Chairman reminded all drivers of their continued responsibility to ensure their vehicles are roadworthy at all times.

14. **Minutes of Licensing Panels**

The minutes of the following Licensing Panels were noted by Committee members:

- BP Oil Limited – 28 January 2020
- Private Hire Drivers' Licence – 24 February 2020
- Sandhurst Service Station - 10 March 2020
- Hall and Woodhouse - 1 June 2020
- King's Kebabs - 11 June 2020

CHAIRMAN