

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

General Licensing Committee

HELD AT 10.00AM ON 26 FEBRUARY 2009

AT COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Mrs E Gillespie (Chairman)

Mr G Andrews (as substitute for Mr M Leonard), Mr P Cross, Mrs P Slatter

Officers:

Mr S Bryan, Mr P Holland, Ms A Nauth, Mrs J Thompson

Apologies

Mr M Leonard

10. Minutes, 31 July 2008

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2008 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them.

11. Taxi Licensing Policy

The committee considered the report of the head of environmental services. Mr P Holland, Environmental Protection and Licensing Manager, explained the background to the policy and the changes made to the original draft as a result of the taxi working group's recommendations.

Mr D Pryor of Pryors spoke to the committee about the policy. He said that the trade were largely unaware that the policy was to be approved. He raised concerns that the policy was not addressing actual problems. The knowledge test was perceived as unduly difficult and unnecessary. He suggested that drivers should be required to pass a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in road passenger vehicle driving within a year of gaining their licence as this covered a greater range of skills.

Mr Holland explained that the knowledge test would establish a basic level of competence to ensure that drivers were suitable to carry passengers without

compromising public safety. A NVQ would be more onerous. Members of the trade had been consulted and kept informed in a variety of ways through the development of the policy. He thanked those that had responded to the consultations and thanked Mr Pryor for his involvement.

The committee recommended that in time only four or five MOT test centres, spaced around the district, be authorised to test licensed vehicles, as this would give greater control and consistency in the vehicle tests.

A motion to change references in the policy from taxi sub-committee to General Licensing Committee was proposed, seconded, and agreed.

A motion to add the relevant legislation as an appendix to the policy was proposed, seconded and agreed.

A motion to review the policy within 18 months to take account of new legislation, the proposed change to the test centres, and any other relevant changes was proposed, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED: to

- adopt the taxi licensing policy as set out in the report to the committee, subject to changing references in the policy from taxi sub-committee to General Licensing Committee and adding relevant legislation as an appendix;
- authorise the head of environmental services (head of legal and democratic services from 3 March 2009) in consultation with the Chairman of the General Licensing Committee to make minor amendments to the licensing policy where necessary;
- recommend Council to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution arising from the adoption of this licensing policy;
- review and update the policy within the next 18 months to take account of relevant changes in legislation and to include four or five authorised MOT test centres.

12. Declaration of an air quality management area in Watlington

The committee considered the report of the head of environmental services. Mr D Dodds, Cabinet member, Mr P Holland, Environmental Protection and Licensing Manager, and Mr S Bryan, introduced the report.

RESOLVED: to declare an air quality management area (AQMA) in the Couching Street area of Watlington as indicated in the order attached to the report.

13. Taxi licensing sub-committees

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services.

RESOLVED:

1. not to agree the terms of reference for sub-committees as these had been deleted from the taxi licensing policy.
2. to agree the procedures set out in the report for the hearing of appeals under the policy, subject to removing the reference to appeals being heard by two people.
3. to recommend Council to add for clarity 'to hear all issues and appeals under the terms of the taxi licensing policy' explicitly to the General Licensing Committee's terms of reference in the Constitution.

Chairman _____

Date