

**MINUTES OF GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**MEETING DATE** Tuesday, 12 March 2019

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Barbara Nathan (Chair), Jacqui Mort (Vice-Chair), Jane Bell, Malcolm Donoghue and Mary Green

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor Karen Walton

**OFFICERS:** Mark Marshall (Head of Licensing), Tasneem Safdar (Senior Solicitor), Coral Astbury (Trainee Governance and Member Services Officer) and Charlotte Lynch (Trainee Governance and Member Services Officer)

**OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:** Councillor Karen Walton (Cabinet Member (Public Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Environmental))

**PUBLIC:** 0

**28 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Ken Jones, Mike Nathan and Paul Wharton submitted apologies.

**29 Minutes of the General Licensing Committee**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The minutes of the General Licensing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

**30 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 11 September 2018 of General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel meeting held on 11 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

**31 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 16 October 2018 of General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel meeting held on 16 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

**32 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 20 November 2018 of General Licensing**

## **Committee**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel meeting held on 20 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

### **33 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 12 February 2019 of General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel meeting held on 12 February 2018 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

### **34 Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of any interest.

### **35 Taxi Licensing Activity**

The Head of Licensing presented a report which provided information to Members on the Taxi Licensing Activity that had taken place during November 2018 to February 2019. The activity included plying for hire operations, licence suspensions, licence revocations and a prohibition notice being issued.

Member's attention was drawn to the Licensing Forward Plan at Appendix A. The Head of Licensing explained that most actions were either complete, ongoing or in progress. There was only one outstanding item on the action plan which was not complete, the implementation of an operator accreditation scheme. As it is currently a voluntary scheme there has been little interest.

Members requested that this action remain on the plan and requested for the situation to be monitored.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the report be noted.

### **36 Fees and Charges**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Licensing which proposed increasing fees in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences, with a view to recovering the costs of issue and administration in order to start moving Licensing towards cost neutrality. It was explained to members that these increases were of a modest nature with the increases being between £5 and £10 dependant on the application type. Members were advised that if they wished to proceed with the new fee structure then a public notice must be placed in the local newspaper specifying a date for any objections (not less than 28 days from the date on which the notice is first published).

Members were also informed of an increase on the knowledge test fee to £25. Currently, the authority only charges for the re-sit of the test so the first one is free for applicants. The Head of Licensing explained that a certain amount of resource and time is spent administering and marking the test. In comparison it was explained that many Neighbouring Authorities charge between £18.50 to £70 making South Ribble's fee low. This increase did not need to be consulted upon but notification of these charges would be advertised in due course.

Members expressed concern at the initial cost for new applicants wishing to become a hackney carriage or private hire driver. It was emphasised by members that this is an example of an applicant having to outlay costs before they have initially started paid employment. The Head of Licensing assured Members that Licensing are trying to make the process more cost effective for new applicants. As part of the policies implemented by the Council a new driver must undertake an NVQ. Most colleges charge around £225 for the course, however the licensing department are providing this course in house and charging £150.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

Members approved the following recommendations:

1. That the proposed fees under Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to be published.
2. That if no objections are received, then the proposed fees under Section 70 of the said legislation will come into effect on 1 May 2019.
3. That the proposed fees under Section 53 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 be consulted on as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
4. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Licensing (in consultation with the Monitoring Officer) to consider any responses to the Consultation set out in the report and approve the proposed fees to come into effect on 1 May 2019.

### **37 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED: (Unanimously):

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as it involved the discussion of information defined as exempt from publication under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

By Virtue of Paragraph 1: information relating to any individual.

### **38 Use of Standing Order 35**

The Head of Licensing updated Members as to the recent use of Standing Order 35 whereby a decision was taken to revoke a driver taxi licence with immediate effect, in the interest of public safety.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the decision be noted.

Chair

Date