

GENERAL PURPOSES LICENSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 15 June 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Cook (Vice-Chair), Campbell, Clarkson, Goddard, Gotch, Keen and Royce.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Brundin (Councillor Brett to substitute), Van Coulter and Williams.

In the absence of Councillor Brundin (Chair), Councillor Cook (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None made.

3. HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Royce asked for this item to be included on the agenda. She explained to the Committee that she wanted to ensure that women's views were represented at bodies such as the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Sub Committee. Women were the main users of taxis in Oxford, and therefore it was important for female views to be represented. There should be at least one woman on any panel at all times.

Councillor Cook pointed out that nominations to the various Committees were made by the political groups, and that it would be best to take up this issue via those groups. Daniel Smith (Legal) added that the Hackney Carriage sub committee had to be politically balanced. Substitutions were permitted, but they had to be by someone from the "parent" committee, and from the same political party as the member being substituted.

Resolved that this issue should be taken forwards via the political groups.

4. UPDATE ON TAXI LICENSING ACTIVITY JANUARY 2011 - MARCH 2011

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended), concerning taxi licensing activity between January and March 2011. Julian Alison (Licensing Team Leader) presented the report to the Committee, explained the background and answered questions. He explained that the onus was on applicants to prove that they were a "fit and proper" person to hold a licence, and that they met the criteria required by the Council. Each application was carefully processed. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks would pick up anything that had been omitted from the form.

However, the Committee felt that it was important for applicants without any convictions to state this fact on their application form, not simply leave the boxes blank.

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the contents of the report;
- (2) To note all comments made.

5. UPDATE ON REQUEST TO LICENCE A HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE AS AN OMNIBUS

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning a request to licence a horse drawn carriage as an omnibus. The applicant, Mr Kevin Merry, attended the meeting and answered questions from the Committee. He explained the proposed route through Oxford and plans to clear any manure from the roads on a daily basis. The horse drawn omnibus was different from a taxi - the fare paid would cover the fixed sightseeing journey. The fare would be approximately £40 for a 25 minute journey.

Daniel Smith (Legal) added that concerns had been expressed by the joint committee of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle operators. If the Committee agreed to the proposal, the Council would make a bye-law permitting this scheme to operate, after which there would be a period of consultation. Councillor Cook suggested that the joint committee be informed how the scheme was intended to run, and then if they so chose, they could make any objections as part of the normal consultation process. Mr Merry should be invited to the next meeting of the licensed taxi trade so that they could address any concerns to him, and he could answer any questions.

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the progress made with Oxfordshire County Council with regard to the proposed Horse Drawn Carriage Scheme;
- (2) To approve the level of fee determined to be reasonable for the guide, driver and proprietor of a Horse Drawn Carriage;
- (3) To recommend Council to make the appropriate Bye-laws;
- (4) To authorise the Head of Environmental Development and the Head of Law and Governance to carry out the statutory advertisement of the Bye-laws.

6. CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION IN LICENSED VEHICLES - UPDATE

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) giving an update on the progress of the CCTV initiative that was implemented on 1st March 2011.

Resolved to note the current position.

7. HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF - APPLICATION FOR INCREASE

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) giving consideration to the proposal that an automatic increase to the Hackney Carriage Tariff of 20 pence per journey be applied upon the price of a litre of diesel fuel reaching £1.50.

Councillor Cook expressed doubt about this. Fuel costs were complicated, and he did not think that the cost of fares should vary from day to day. The taxi trade could ask for an increase in tariffs at any time should there be a significant rise in the price of diesel fuel. It would be preferable for an approach to be made to the Committee, with evidence of prices, and a request for a specific increase, rather than creating a system that would make pricing over complicated.

Therefore the recommendations were not approved.

8. PAVEMENT STALL SIZE

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) that detailed proposals for the design, layout and size of street trading pitches, with special reference to pitches that had the capacity to overhang the 2m x 1m curtilage. Tony Payne and Andy Thompson (Licensing) introduced this item to the Committee and explained the background. A range of manufacturers provided a standard stall measuring 2.4m by 1.3m, which was easily obtained. This slight increase in size, from the current 2m by 1m, would make it easier to achieve a more uniform appearance of stalls across the City. The Committee felt that, if this was agreed, there should be no supernumerary stands and displays extending beyond the stalls agreed curtilage would need to be agreed by condition.

Resolved:-

- (1) To grant delegated authority to the Head of Environmental Development to decide and authorise variations to stall sizes where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so, having regard to the location of the stall and the type of goods to be sold, up to a maximum size of 2.4m x 1.3m (8ft x 4ft);
- (2) To agree the prescriptive criteria for a street trading stall as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (3) To approve that the Head of Environmental Development only be required to refer the decision to Committee for approval if representations are received from interested parties that a stall should not be increased in size or the conditions varied.

9. DESIGNATION OF STREET FOR STREET TRADING

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report seeking approval for an amendment to the Street Trading Policy in relation to the designation of streets in the City of Oxford.

Resolved:-

- (1) To recommend Council designates all streets within the Oxford City Council boundary as Consent Streets for the purposes of the Street Trading Scheme;
- (2) To remove the designation of the Covered Market Walkways, the Clarendon Centre Walkways and the Westgate Centre Walkways;
- (3) To authorise the Head of Environmental Development to carry out the required consultation as set out in paragraph 13 of the report;
- (4) To receive a further report to consider responses to the consultation before making a recommendation to Council.

10. AMENDMENT TO FEES AND CHARGES 2011/12

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) that sought to amend the fee for a weekly street trading fee in order to rectify an error.

Resolved to approve the amendment of the fee for a one week street trading consent to £155.

11. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 1st March and 19th May 2011.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note that the next meetings would be held on 19th October 2011 and 22nd February 2012,
- (2) Request that the meetings followed on *immediately after* meetings of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee without a break between them.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm