

PLACE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 12TH DECEMBER, 2018

Present (Augmented by members of the Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee) – Councillors Abdullah (Chairman), Haslam (Vice-Chairman), Adia, Bagnall, Chadwick, Darvesh, Mrs. Fairclough, Gibbon, Greenhalgh, Haworth, Khurram, Murray, Pattison, Peel, Sanders, Warren (as deputy for Councillor Walsh), P. Wild and Wilkinson.

Officers

Mr. G. Brough	Interim Director of Place
Ms. Hopkins	Assistant Director Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services
Miss. P. Clyne	Principal Licensing Officer
Mrs. E. Pritchard	Principal Licensing Officer
Mr. I. D. Mulholland	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Morris, Gillies, Hewitt and Walsh.

Councillor Abdullah in the Chair

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October, 2018 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

8. GAMBLING ACT 2005 – REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND REVIEW OF GAMBLING PREMISES LICENCE FEES

The Director of People Submitted a report which set out details of a review of statement of principles and review of gambling premises licence fees under the Gambling Act, 2005.

The report explained that the Council was required by statute to review and publish its statement of principles every three years. The most recent statement was published in 2016 and was now due for review.

The report provided information in respect of the proposed changes and the consultation process to be followed.

The report also requested approval to increase the premises licence fees from the current level of 75% of the statutory maximum level to the maximum, this was to address the current under recovery in terms of costs associated with providing the licensing function in respect of gambling.

Members in their discussion referred to –

- Reason for the 75% of the maximum charge currently;
- Cost recovery;
- Gaming machines and cost to applicant and cost of officer time;
- The practicalities of fee increases;
- The effect of an increase to the statutory maximum fees; and
- Reflection of officer time issues.

It was agreed that the report and discussions be noted.

9. DISABILITY AWARENESS AND SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR THE LICENSING INDUSTRY

The Director of Place submitted a report on matters around disability awareness and safeguarding training for the licensing industry.

The report advised that, in line with good practice, the Council was proposing to introduce mandatory disability awareness and safeguarding training for Bolton's taxi industry and across the licensing regime.

The report went on to advise that with effect from a date to be determined, the training would become a pre-requisite for all licensed drivers both new and at renewal and for private hire operators again for both new and renewal. It's recognised that people with disabilities used taxi services frequently and it was appropriate to ensure that licence holders had the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to offer appropriate assistance to passengers. In recent years the national media had highlighted several cases where the taxi industry had been involved in child sexual exploitation and other safeguarding matters.

A second phase would see the training rolled out across the rest of the licensing industry including those involved with premises licensed under the Licensing Act, 2003 and the Gambling Act.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Drivers being the eyes and ears;
- It being the right thing to do;
- The practicalities of the training implementation;
- Making it mandatory from the start;
- How the training was funded;
- The costs including to drivers;
- The providers costs;
- A more corporate roll out of such training;
- The awareness of the trade reps regarding the changes;
- Matters around the test practicalities and a re-sit opportunity;
- Issues around not increasing the licensing back log;
- The NVQ route;

- The length of the training;
- Such improvements were being introduced in other industries;
- Refresher training at renewal; and
- The operators taking some of the costs.

It was agreed that the report and discussions be noted.

10. REQUEST TO COMMISSION A HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

The Director of Place submitted a report which sought comments on the establishment of a hackney carriage unmet demand survey.

The report explained that the Council currently had a policy that limited the number of hackney carriage licences it would issue. HM Government guidance prescribed that an unmet demand survey should be conducted at least every three years if a limit was in place. It was now three years since the last survey was undertaken.

The report also provided information on the proposals and scope of the survey and details of the cost and cost recovery.

Members in their deliberations referred to-

- Matters around finding of the level; and
- Possible limits to private hire numbers.

It was agreed that the report and discussions be noted.

11. STATEMENT OF FITNESS AND SUITABILITY (PRIVATE HIRE, HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND SOCIAL NEEDS TRANSPORT)

The Director of Place submitted a report which set out details of the proposed revision of the Council's Statement of Fitness and Suitability (private hire, hackney carriage and social needs transport).

The report also explained that the statement of fitness and suitability was adopted in 2009 and developed in conjunction with the other Greater Manchester authorities.

The 2016 revision to the document included standards for social needs transport and strengthened the existing standards concerning cultural change.

The report went on to set out details of the two elements which were proposed for change.

Members in their deliberations referred to-

- Convictions and non-convictions;

- Minor and intermediate offences;
- Removal of ambiguity regarding those with sexual offences;
- The need for a robust policy and reducing inconsistencies;
- The need for a clean service;
- the need for soft intelligence on some matters;
- matters around the delegation of some matters to officers;
- all about keeping people safe; and
- consistencies regarding the use of soft information.

It was agreed that the report and discussions be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.46pm)