MINUTES OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE
HELD ON

20 January 2015 7.30pm - 8.10pm

PRESENT

Committee Members
Councillor Jacqui Cross (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor Janet Doyle
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Dennis Palmer
Councillor Edna Stevens
Councillor Emma Toal

Officers
Michael Pitt, Environment and Licensing Manager
Denise Westwood, Junior Legal Assistant
Jo Maskell, Governance Support Officer

APOLOGIES

Councillor Maggie Hulcoop
Councillor Nick Churchill
Councillor Tony Hall
Councillor Bill Pryor

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2015 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Update on Use of Bus Lanes in Harlow

The Committee received a verbal update on the proposal to allow Private Hire vehicles to use bus lanes in the town.

As from 8 December 2014, Essex County Council had begun an eighteen month trial period permitting such use. They were
monitoring the situation and had asked this Council’s Licensing Team for feedback. This would be provided at the end of the trial period, unless a substantial problem arose in the meantime.

To date, there had been no reports of a discernible adverse impact on traffic flow from this trial.

RESOLVED that the update is noted.

(b) Update on Quarterly Reporting of Statistical Data from National Health Service (NHS)

In January 2013 the Committee had received a report on the impact of alcohol consumption on local services and a presentation from a public health specialist. The mutual benefits from sharing and joint working with the NHS had been recognised and quarterly reporting of statistical data from the NHS to this Committee had been agreed (Minute 40, 22/1/13).

However, since that date there had been a major restructuring within the NHS and changes to both responsibilities and personnel had interrupted the lines of communication. Responsibilities for public health functions currently lay with Essex County Council, who had been asked to provide this information, which would be shared with this Committee once it was received.

RESOLVED that the update is noted.

(c) Other Matters Arising

None.

36. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

None.

37. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee received its proposed work plan for the remainder of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that the work plan is noted.

38. CONTROL OF UNAUTHOURISED ADVERTISING: UPDATE

The Committee received a progress report on the proposed implementation of the recent Cabinet decision to minimise portable advertisements on Council-owned land. This would be achieved by phasing out the licensing of “A” boards by the end of March 2015 and removing
offending signs using powers under Section 132 of the Highways Act 1980.

**RESOLVED** that the current position in relation to this issue, as set out in the report, is noted.

39. **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FEE PROPOSALS**

Further to Minute 30 (25/11/14,) the Committee received a report on the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing fees for adoption from 1 April 2015.

The report addressed the representations received within the consultation period, which were reproduced at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Committee thanked those who had contributed to the consultation.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the fees proposed at Appendix 2 of the report, to be charged with effect from 1 April 2015 for the purposes of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing, be adopted as part of the annual fees and charges setting process.

40. **COMPLIANCE STANDARD FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES TEST STATION TENDER**

The Committee received a report proposing a revised compliance standard document for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle inspections, which was mostly a consolidation of the previous literature.

The revised document, which was intended to improve transparency and comprehensiveness, would be made available in time for the tender process for the testing station contract (which was due for renewal in April 2015).

Whilst the Committee was in agreement with the proposed compliance standard for vehicle inspections, it queried why a sole provider would be selected in the imminent tender process and whether there would be benefits by appointing more than one designated testing station.

It was agreed that the feasibility of appointing numerous providers should be investigated and reported back to the next meeting. This would delay the contract renewal date, but there were provisions in place to allow for an extension of the current contract if required.

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the proposed compliance standard document for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle inspections, as detailed in
Appendix 3 of the report, is approved subject to the following amendments to that appendix:

(i) Delete “Appendix A – Interior Lighting. Must be sufficient to allow passengers to get in and out of the vehicle safely and to assist passengers to handle money etc.”;

(ii) Substitute “Maximum” with “Minimum” net power (KW) at Appendix O.

(b) a report on the feasibility of appointing more than one provider as a designated testing station, is submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

41. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

None.

42. MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE