

LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST 2019
GIPPING ROOM, GRAFTON HOUSE
6.00 PM

Present: Councillors S Barber, K Cracknell, S Darwin, E Hughes, L Richardson, J Riley, B Studd, L Trenchard, C Wright, N Cenci and R Vickery

13. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Connelly, Elavalakan, Xhaferaj and Lockington.

14. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12 June 2019

The Senior Licensing & Enforcement Officer confirmed that a consultation had taken place with the appropriate service areas with regards to holding evening Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Enforcement Sub-Committee meetings and the cost implications of this remained under consideration.

It was agreed that the hotspots data mapping which was requested at the previous meeting would be progressed as soon as possible, with an update to be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 be signed as a true record.

15. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business

Resolved:

That the Order of Business be confirmed as printed on the Agenda.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17. LR/19/04 Women's Safety Charter (Purple Flag)

17.1. The Officer confirmed that the Purple Flag initiative was an accreditation scheme which focussed on and recognised excellence in the management of town and city centres at night and their efforts to ensure a safe night out for everyone. A review was due to be undertaken later in the year and the licensing trade had been approached to discuss how the scheme could be better promoted in Ipswich (such as lighting buildings up purple) and ensuring as many licensees as possible were aware of the benefits of the Purple Flag. It was noted that the scheme differed from Best Bar None which was an accreditation awarded to premises.

17.2. A general discussion took place regarding the reinvigoration of the scheme and it was agreed that promotional materials, such as logos in premises and notices on street furniture to advise that an area was 'Purple Flag Accredited' be considered further. It was noted that the scheme should encompass all areas of the night time economy and this would be especially important should the Women's Safety Charter be included as part of this accreditation, rather than in its' own entity.

17.3. The importance of women's safety was discussed and it was agreed that the possible introduction of a separate Women's Safety Charter be discussed further in a future Working Group with input from the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection. It was also agreed that Councillors feedback regarding the Purple Flag scheme be reported to Economic Development who would be leading on this initiative. It was suggested that a consultation with licensed premises and stakeholders (open to the public) should also be undertaken.

Action: That a Working Group be arranged to discuss the future of a Women's Safety Charter in Ipswich.

17.4. Following a request from Councillor Vickery, It was agreed that an update be provided at the next committee meeting regarding the voluntary scheme 'Reducing the Strength'. It was confirmed that although many premises had voluntarily signed up to the scheme when it was launched, this had to be voluntary and could not be imposed on someone's licensing conditions.

Action: That an update on the voluntary scheme 'Reducing the Strength' be provided at the next meeting.

17.5. Councillor Trenchard asked that it be noted that the licensing newsletter received had been excellent.

Resolved:

That the Committee support the Purple Flag scheme.

Reason: to enable the Council to maintain a nationally recognised accreditation concerning the safety of everyone utilising the night time economy.

18. LR/19/05 The Licensing Act 2003: Applications Update Report

18.1. It was confirmed that the Aurora Bar & Restaurant had withdrawn their application for longer opening hours following a high number of resident objections.

18.2. The Officer reported that a premises licence had been granted for The Grinning Rat although no tenant had been found at this time.

Resolved:

that the report be noted.

19. LR/19/06 Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy

19.1. The Officer reported that a second round of consultation had been undertaken on the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy following the previous Licensing & Regulatory Committee meeting where it was agreed that from 2020 vehicles had to be less than 15 years old, and from 2025 less than 10 years old. Varying responses had been received following the consultation but on the whole the trade had been supportive of the age limits. Two drivers had requested exemptions to their vehicles, as detailed in the report, but it was advised that any potential exemptions would need careful consideration. Other changes to the policy included an amendment to the dress code so that it was gender neutral.

19.2. Discussion took place around what the possible exemptions, if appropriate, could be and it was agreed that the policy should be amended to include a statement that said 'the Licensing & Regulatory Committee reserves the right to make exemptions for vehicles however, any exemptions would be heard and considered by the Committee'. It was also agreed that a set of criteria for potential exemptions be discussed at the next Licensing & Regulatory Committee meeting.

Action: That the Committee consider a list of criteria for possible exemptions to the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy at the next meeting.

19.3. The Officer confirmed that the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association had made some comments and it was agreed that a statement be included in the policy at section 11 to state that the Licensing & Regulatory Committee was committed to robustly enforcing the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

19.4. Discussion took place around the number of passengers and guide dogs which could be transported in a saloon vehicle at the same time and it was confirmed that the agreed acceptable amount was two passengers and two guide dogs. Information about this had been included previously in the Taxi Times newsletters however, this could be publicised again.

Resolved:

that the revised draft Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy, with the amendments as per the above and attached as Appendix 1, be submitted to the Council for consideration and adoption.

20. LR/19/07 Suffolk New College Course - Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver

20.1. The Officer confirmed that following a discussion at a previous Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Sub-Committee meeting, it was agreed that the Suffolk New College course provided to new/applying taxi drivers be considered to see if extra content regarding equality and diversity, plus inappropriate conversations, was required.

20.2. The Officer confirmed that the course was held over two days and there were a number of slides included regarding customers and how they should be treated. Following discussion, Suffolk New College had proposed an extra slide for the course, which provided some more information around equality and diversity and what constituted an appropriate conversation.

20.3. Discussion took place around the need to ensure that all protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 was covered and it was agreed that a second slide be included specifically on the Act which would quote the definition and include a statement to say that Ipswich Borough Council was committed to enforcing this Act.

20.4. It was requested the spelling of 'offense' be amended to 'offence'.

Resolved:

that the report be noted.

21. Exclusion of Public

Resolved:

that the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining business under section 100(A) of the Local Government Act as it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

22. Unconfirmed Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12 June 2019

Resolved:

that the Unconfirmed Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12 June 2019 be signed as a true record.

23. LR/19/08 Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Enforcement

Resolved:

that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.19 pm

Chair