

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

Meeting held 8 November 2012

PRESENT: Councillors John Robson (Chair), Nikki Bond, Jillian Creasy, George Lindars-Hammond, Ian Saunders, Clive Skelton (Deputy Chair), Stuart Wattam and Philip Wood

.....

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neale Gibson, Vickie Priestley, Nikki Sharpe and Geoff Smith.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest upon agenda items.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 10th, 13th, 17th and 25th September 2012 and 2nd and 4th October 2012 were approved as correct records.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982 - STREET TRADING POLICY APPROVAL

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Licensing Officer regarding the approval of a revised Street Trading Policy.

5.2 Shimla Rani, Principal Licensing Officer, informed Members that the revised Policy would make amendments to fees and forms, as well as the procedures and protocols around the consultation process when a Street Trading Consent was applied for, in order to simplify the current process, which had become very complicated.

5.3 In attendance for this item was Martin Judge, a local street trading consent holder.

5.4 Mr. Judge commented that he felt there was not enough support from the Licensing Authority in attending football matches in order to prosecute unlicensed traders. Ms. Rani replied that Licensing Officers did attend matches on a rota system and that all reports of unlicensed

traders were investigated fully. She added that there was other enforcement which needed doing across the City, which was why not every match could always be attended by Officers.

- 5.5 Mr. Judge went on to explain that unlicensed traders often arrived very early to reserve certain key trading pitches at football games, and there was no-one available for legitimate traders to report this to in time for the match.
- 5.6 In terms of the fees charged to process consents, Ms. Rani explained that the Council only charged enough to cover costs; it was not a profit making business. It was confirmed that for each event a street trading consent was applied for, there were a series of steps and checks with various authorities which had to be undertaken by the Licensing Authority.
- 5.7 Mr. Judge stated that it was often difficult to obtain 28 days clear notice for a one day event, as he might not find out about an event with that much notice, and Ms. Rani confirmed that there was some flexibility in the system, although this could not be guaranteed.
- 5.8 **RESOLVED:** That the alterations to the Street Trading Policy, forms and fees contained within the report now submitted be accepted with the following additions:-

(a) the Licensing Authority gives a commitment that all one day consents will be determined within a maximum of 28 days; and

(b) an 800 metre radius on plans for fixed positioned (Static Street Trading) applications, instead of a one mile radius, be enforced.

6. PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING - HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES REVIEW (DETERMINATION OF FEES)

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Licensing Officer reviewing the fare structure and tariffs for Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council.
- 6.2 In attendance were two representatives from the Sheffield Taxi Trade Association (STTA).
- 6.3 Hafaes Rehman, STTA, stated that he felt fares should be increased to reflect rising costs of tax, fuel and insurance. Members stated that other professions too had suffered the knock-on effects of the rise of living costs, but had received pay freezes. Members wished to see more documented evidence of the rising costs of insurance and other costs for taxi drivers before making a decision, and it was agreed that the STTA would provide this prior to the next Committee meeting. It was noted that Sheffield was already 13th highest in terms of Hackney

Carriage fares out of 81 Northern towns and cities.

- 6.4 **RESOLVED:** That a decision on the fares for Hackney Carriages be deferred to the Licensing Committee meeting to be held in January 2013, and the Taxi Trades be requested to provide documentary written evidence of overall running costs to drivers and mile by mile costs of running a licensed Hackney Carriage, including details regarding insurance, fuel, road tax and licence fee costs, for consideration at that meeting.

7. PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING - TAXI ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Licensing Officer outlining the enforcement activity undertaken in relation to private hire and taxi licensing for the period 1st March to 31st August, 2012.

- 7.2 In attendance were two representatives from the Sheffield Taxi Trades Association (STTA).

- 7.3 Several problems were discussed, such as the lack of places for taxis to rank in the city centre, and the subsequent problems this caused. There were particular problems noted around Castle Street and Carver Street. There seemed to be a few selfish drivers ruining it for the majority.

- 7.4 It was noted that the Chair of the Licensing Committee would be undertaking some shadowing work on enforcement duties in January 2013 with Licensing Officers.

- 7.5 Members were concerned about the time and cost effectiveness of taxi enforcement work undertaken at East Midlands Airport.

- 7.6 It was noted that many decisions made by the Licensing Sub-Committee with regard to the issuing of taxi licences had been overturned by the Magistrates Court, and it was agreed that further joint training was required with Magistrates and Members to ensure that a clear direction was taken with regard to the suitability of taxi drivers in Sheffield.

- 7.7 Members were concerned that since the Licensing Service had been internally restructured, there was less taxi enforcement taking place. Members wished there to be at least one dedicated taxi enforcement session per week, with external enforcement activities to be reduced.

- 7.8 **RESOLVED:** That (a) the contents of the report now submitted and the comments now made be noted; and

(b) the Chief Licensing Officer be requested to ensure that at least one dedicated taxi enforcement session is carried out per week, with

requests to attend specific enforcement exercises, such as airports, being considered on a case by case basis and to ensure that any attendance at these locations has no detrimental effect on the delivery of local enforcement.