

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **General Purposes Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark NG24 1BY on Thursday, 11 November 2021 at 6.55 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Crowe (Chairman)
Councillor R White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor P Harris, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor Mrs S Saddington, Councillor I Walker and Councillor T Wildgust

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor L Brazier (Committee Member), Councillor M Cope (Committee Member), Councillor Mrs S Michael (Committee Member), Councillor K Walker (Committee Member) and Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead (Committee Member)

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

18 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being recorded by the Council and that the meeting was being livestreamed and broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House.

19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minute No. 12 – Satisfaction Surveys for Taxi Users and the Taxi Trade

It was reported that the response to the above survey had been disappointing. Members were requested to encourage their constituents to participate in the Survey if possible.

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held 2 September 2021 were a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 FORWARD PLAN (DECEMBER 2021 TO NOVEMBER 2022)

AGREED (unanimously) that the following items be added to the Forward Plan:

- (i) Review of Taxi Fares (*This was put forward for inclusion following the recent increases in the price of petrol and diesel.*)
- (ii) Attendance by Representative of the Gambling Commission.
- (iii) Inspection of Taxis/Night of Action for Taxis
- (iv) Satisfaction Surveys for Taxi Users and the Taxi Trade – verbal update on comments in relation to the Kirkgate Taxi Rank.

21 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY - CONSULTEES RESPONSE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to provide Members with the consultation feedback of the Review of the Gambling Policy together with onward recommendation to full Council for adoption of the Statement of Gambling Policy.

The report set out that the Policy must be reviewed at least every three years and that the Council were responsible for issuing premise licences for gambling premises, issuing permits in respect of gaming on licensed premises and for registering small society lotteries. The Council were not responsible for licensing operators or individuals concerned in carrying out the business as they were licensing by the Gambling Commission and subject to stringent statutory controls.

It was noted that since the adoption of the original Statement in 2006 the Council had considered a resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005 not to issue any premise licenses for casinos. This had again been agreed by full Council in 2018.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the responses received to the review, with paragraph 4.2 of the report noting that the low response would appear to be indicative of the low level of general concern with this particular licensing function.

In considering the report a Member raised concern as to the issue with online gambling. The Business Manager advised that this was regulated by the Gambling Commission with the Chairman requesting that a representative be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the issue.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the consultee responses be noted and that the draft Statement of Gambling Policy be supported and forwarded to full Council for approval; and
- (b) full Council be recommended to renew the 'no casino' resolution as referred to in paragraph 3.0 of the report.

22 SAFEGUARDING ISSUES AND TAXI DRIVERS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to provide Members with an update on the steps taken to increase safeguarding controls for taxi drivers within Newark & Sherwood.

The report set out the measures agreed in 2015 to ensure that robust safeguarding measures were in place, details of which were reported in paragraph 3.0 of the report. It was noted that some of these consisted of face to face training with Licensing Officers but that due to the pandemic this had not been possible. This had resulted in a backlog of drivers who required the training. It was further reported that dates for training sessions had been set, now that restrictions were lifting and that drivers who had not yet undertaken the training would be issued with reminder letters. It was likely that the sessions would commence in January 2022.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

23 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Senior Licensing Officer which provided members with activity and performance of the Licensing Team which included details of current ongoing enforcement issues.

Information contained within the report related to the number of applications for grants and renewals of licences for Hackney Carriage; Private Hire; and Ambulance Drivers together with those for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. A note of ongoing enforcement activity was also listed with information as to what action had been taken to-date.

In considering the report, a Member noted that statistical information had previously been supplied in relation to the number of inspections carried out and any issues arising therefrom. The Business Manager – Public Protection advised that during the pandemic there had been little activity with taxis as there had been no night time economy. He added that there was a programme of inspections scheduled and that Officers were looking to carry out a 'Night of Action' for taxis.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 7.10 pm.

Chairman