

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, 2 September 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Crowe (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor Mrs S Saddington, Councillor I Walker, Councillor K Walker, Councillor Wildgust and Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor R White (Vice-Chairman), Councillor L Brazier (Committee Member), Councillor M Cope (Committee Member) and Councillor P Harris (Committee Member)

Prior to the transaction of the business on the Agenda the Committee held a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Mrs Kathleen Arnold who had recently passed away and who had served as a Member of both the General Purposes and Licensing Committees.

8 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.

9 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.

10 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2021

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 were a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11 FORWARD PLAN - OCTOBER 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2022

AGREED that the Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 be noted.

12 SATISFACTION SURVEYS FOR TAXI USERS AND THE TAXI TRADE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought Members' approval to undertake a satisfaction survey from both customers who used taxis in the district and from the taxi trade.

It was reported that whilst licensing officers had a great deal of interaction with licensed drivers, there was less contact with taxi users. Whilst complaints from both users and drivers alike offered an insight into the way taxis were operated it did not provide an overall picture. The proposal to undertake a satisfaction survey would

assist the development of the licensing service in terms of shaping future taxi provision and policy. Details of the proposed methodology were reported in paragraph 3 of the report with appendix 1 listing the survey questions.

In considering the report Members noted that it was likely that licensed drivers would raise the issue of enforcement on the unauthorised use of the Castlegate Rank.

A Member requested that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to specifically consider the usage of the taxi rank on Kirkgate. The Business Manager advised that he would add this to the Committee's Forward Plan for the November meeting.

In relation to the publicity of the survey, a Member queried where, other than the Council's own website, it would be publicised. The Business Manager advised that it was hoped that the taxi trade would put a poster in the back of their vehicles and that it would be posted widely on social media.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the undertaking of the surveys for customer satisfaction and the taxi trade be approved;
- (b) the survey questions be noted; and
- (c) the survey be carried out for a 4 week period.

13 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought approval to begin the consultation process to revise the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy.

It was reported that the Gambling Act 2005 required the Council to have in place a Policy relating to the carrying out of its functions under that Act and that the Policy must be reviewed every three years. The review process was outlined in paragraph 4 of the report with a list of the consultees set out in the appendix to the report.

In considering the report Members raised concerns that the map being used in Section 2 – Local Area Profile was incomplete as it did not display a significant number of area within the district. The Business Manager advised he would seek to identify a more up-to-date map.

In relation to the Casinos section, paragraph 5.18.1, a Member queried whether the dates contained therein required amendment. The Business Manager confirmed that the dates would be amended prior to the Policy's adoption. He also noted that in previous years the Committee had recommended to Full Council that a no Casino policy be adopted. He suggested that this be included in the considerations at the November meeting of the Committee.

Members paid particular attention to the issues surrounding online gambling and what checks and procedures were in place to ensure its proper use. The Business Manager advised that the Council had no powers of enforcement as this was the responsibility of the Gambling Commission. He added that many gambling sites were off-shore and therefore were not subject to UK laws. A number of on-shore sites had signed up to self-regulation by joining the Gambling Aware Scheme. In relation to whether the banks worked with the Gambling Commission, he advised that he was not aware that they worked in partnership but that banks had sophisticated software systems which monitored accounts for unusual activity.

AGREED (unanimously) that the requirement for the Gambling Policy to be reviewed be noted.

14 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which provided Members with activity and performance of the Licensing Team which included details of current ongoing enforcement issues.

Information contained in 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.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

15 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

16 MINUTES OF HC/PH DRIVERS LICENCE SUB-COMMITTEE

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers Sub-Committee held on 22 July 2021 be noted.

Meeting closed at 6.23 pm.

Chairman