

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **General Purposes Committee** held in the Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts. NG24 1BY on Thursday, 6 September 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Crowe (Chairman)
 Councillor I Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Arnold, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor
Mrs I Brown, Councillor D Clarke, Councillor M Cope, Councillor
P Duncan, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor D Payne, Councillor
Mrs S Saddington, Councillor Mrs S Soar, Councillor Mrs L Tift and
Councillor B Wells

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead
ABSENCE:

10 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.

11 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED that an audio recording was to be made of the meeting by the Council.

12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Electoral Services Manager which sought approval for the change of two polling places in the Trent and Castle Wards.

It was reported that following the move from Kelham Hall to Castle House the current arrangements had been reviewed and it was proposed to move the polling station from Kelham Hall to the Manners Sutton Primary School in Averham.

In relation to the current polling station at the Christ Church Infant School it was reported that the School Governors had raised issues regarding its closure and had suggested alternative venues. It was therefore proposed that the Christ Church Infant School no longer be used and that the Holy Trinity Community Centre be used for all future elections.

Representations to the proposals had been sought and the responses received were included in the report.

A Member of the Committee highlighted the issues that elderly residents who lived on Broadgate Lane experienced with crossing the A617. She requested that when the polling cards were sent out for the scheduled elections in 2019 the change was clearly marked. The Electoral Services Manager advised that the change of polling station would be highlighted and that there would be sufficient time for all residents to apply for a postal vote if they did not wish to travel to the new venue.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Manners Sutton Primary School, Newark Road, Averham be used as a polling place to replace the Dome Entrance, Kelham Hall, Kelham; and
- (b) the Holy Trinity Community Centre, Boundary Road, Newark be used as a polling place to replace Christ Church Infant School, Victoria Street, Newark.

14 HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE POLICY AMENDMENT

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Environmental Health & Licensing in relation to the proposal to amend the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy the effect of which would require safeguarding training to be undertaken prior to a driver’s licence being issued.

The report set out that in June 2015 the Committee agreed to amend the aforementioned Policy which required all drivers to undertake safeguarding awareness training within 12 months of obtaining their licence. Following discussions with other licensing authorities in Nottinghamshire it was apparent that most required training to be undertaken prior to a licence being issued. Following these discussions it was proposed to amend the Policy with the relevant wording being included at paragraph 3.2 of the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licence Conditions be amended to include the requirement for applicants to attend a safeguarding course prior to their licence being granted; and
- (b) the paragraph set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report be added to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy.

15 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CASTLEGATE TAXI RANK

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Environmental Health & Licensing in relation to a proposal to amend the operating hours of the Castlegate Taxi Rank.

It was reported that the Taxi Rank Order had been amended in November 2011 but subsequently regular complaints had been received from taxi drivers expressing their frustrations at private vehicles parking in the taxi rank during its hours of operation. It was noted that the issue was of particular concern on Friday and Saturday evenings and that despite the issue of Penalty Charge Notices complaints continued to be received.

The current operating hours for the taxi rank were 20:00 to 06:00 hours with the problems arising due to uncontrolled parking between 18:00 and 20:00 hours. Following discussions with Nottinghamshire County Council it had been agreed that the commencement time of the Taxi Rank Order would be amended to 18:00 hours. If approved by Members, it was proposed to undertake a consultation exercise with businesses on Castlegate and with the taxi trade to seek comments on the suggested amendments to the operating times of the taxi rank.

A Member of the Committee commented that the purpose of the taxi rank was to facilitate the dispersal of people from the venues in the town centre. The previous hours had been amended following receipt of representations from local businesses. He stated that the drivers who chose to park in the taxi rank during its hours of operation were fully aware of the restrictions and that there was no traffic enforcement after 18:00 hours. He added that there were sufficient other places to park and that the businesses were not entitled to have free parking adjacent to the premises. He suggested that the hours of operation should commence at 16:00 hours as traffic enforcement officers were still patrolling the area.

Members also raised the question of how the restrictions would be enforced following the proposed amendment to the hours and whether, following the ongoing roadworks, Nottinghamshire County Council would make good any repairs to road markings and signage.

The Business Manager advised that the traffic enforcement officers generally worked between the hours of 08:00 and 17:00/18:00 hours. Following the aforementioned complaints about private vehicles parking in the rank they had been rostered on to work later into the evenings but although tickets had been issued, it had not resolved the problem. He added that when the proposed changes had been made it would be vigorously patrolled. In relation to the signage and road markings discussions had already taken place with the county council with a view to making them more visible.

AGREED (with 13 votes for and 1 abstention) that the proposed times of operation for the taxi rank adjacent to the Swan & Salmon Yard, Castlegate be amended to 16:00 to 06:00 hours each day and that Nottinghamshire County Council undertake the statutory consultation process.

16 UPDATE ON QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager - Environmental Health & Licensing in relation to the activity and performance of the Licensing Team with details of the current ongoing enforcement issues.

The report covered the period from 1 April to 30 June 2018 inclusive and set out the range and number of licence applications during this period. It also highlighted any activity required as a result of the applications.

Information contained in the report relating 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.

Also provided within the report was information relating to both street and house to house collections. Enforcement activity was also listed with information as to what action had been taken to-date for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

17 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 Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

NONE

Meeting closed at 6.25 pm.

Chairman