
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 16 July 2008 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr D.R. Williams JP
Mrs K. Millbank	Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe
Mr D.S. Myers	Mrs J. Ball

In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Member Services Officer
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager
Monica Coffey	- Customer Services Manager
Kevin Rump	- ICT Project Manager
Stephanie Butcher	- Technical Officer - Licensing

44/08 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from S Chapman-Allen and I Sherwood.

On behalf of Members, the Chairman requested that a letter of best wishes to Mr I Sherwood be sent following his recent operation.

46/08 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman had agreed to take the following items as urgent business:

a) Hackney Carriage Fares

The urgency was due to the effects of the fuel increases on the taxi business and the operators' wish to introduce a fare increase, after serving statutory notice. Other authorities had already done this.

The Technical Officer for Licensing presented this item and explained that under Section 65 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 a district council was able to fix the rates and fares for Hackney Carriages within the district.

Action By

**Julie
Britton**

Action By

The last Hackney Carriage Fare review had been conducted in 2005 and became operative on 1st Feb 2006.

The Hackney Carriage trade had requested an increase in fares due to the rising costs of fuel charges. As the fare review was a comprehensive process and was not likely to be completed until Sept/Oct 2008 it was requested that Members approve, under the Extra Charges on the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares, a temporary fuel supplement charge of 20p for each hiring.

The Technical Officer for Licensing had spoken to the trade association representative and the feeling amongst the trade was that 20p was acceptable. Allowing this charge under the 'extras' would provide the trade the option of whether they wished to charge or not. It would also avoid the need for the meter reprogramming with all its associated costs.

Members were provided with fuel increase costs. In Feb 2006, unleaded was 90.6p per litre and diesel was 94.5p per litre compared to June 2008, where unleaded was 118.2 ppl and diesel was 131.6 ppl.

The supplementary charge would have to be advertised in the local press and in the Council offices for 14 days to allow for objections to the proposed amendment. The charges would then be applied on the fifteenth day.

In the league table of fares for the country Breckland was currently at 160 out of 365 authorities for its tariff charges. Locally, in comparison, Great Yarmouth was at 125 and Forest Heath at 166.

RESOLVED that a temporary fuel supplementary charge of 20p for each hiring under the 'extra' charges on the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares be approved, subject to:

- i) the supplementary charges being appropriately advertised for 14 days; and
- ii) dependent on any objections not being received to the proposed amendment, the 'extra' charges be applied on the fifteenth day.

On a different matter the Chairman informed Members of the forthcoming changes to licensing laws relating to hire and reward issues. A full and comprehensive review would be conducted and a report would be presented to a future meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

b) Payment of Honoraria

The urgency was due to the increased work load that the two staff members had taken on. As this issue contained exempt information it was agreed to discuss this matter with the exclusion of the press and public (see Minute Nos. 51/52/08 below).

**Stephanie
Butcher**

Action By

47/08 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 19 JUNE 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 5)

- a) Review of Lease Car Mileage Rates (Minute No. 12/08 – Agenda item 7)

RESOLVED that the recommendation with regard to considering a dual mileage rate for petrol and diesel vehicles before the annual review was conducted **not be supported**.

- b) Mobile Devices Policy (Minute No. 12/08 – Agenda item 7a)

RESOLVED that the Mobile Devices Policy be adopted, subject to further amendments (see Minute No.48/08 below).

- c) Adoption

RESOLVED that, subject to item (a) above and subject to the amendments at Minute No. 48/08 below, the Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 19 June 2008 be adopted.

48/08 MOBILE DEVICES POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The ICT Manager informed Members that there were a number of mobile devices in circulation but there was no current underlying Mobile Devices Policy for usage. This Policy had been devised not only to protect staff, to set the ground rules for future usage, but also to protect the Council.

The Policy as presented had been recommended from the Local Joint Consultative Committee to the General Purposes Committee for adoption and option 2 of the report had been agreed subject to a number of amendments. The Corporate Management Team had also preferred option 2.

Each of the following four options had a cost against them:

- 1) do nothing
- 2) restriction on personal usage
- 3) allowance for personal usage
- 4) split bill tariff.

Since the aforementioned meetings, the ICT Manager had sought legal advice concerning the Health & Safety aspect of the policy with regard to the use of cradles whilst driving using mobile devices. It had been established that the purchase of any future cradles was not recommended as this could be seen as the Council encouraging people to use their mobile devices whilst driving on council business. As the law surrounding this issue was unclear the policy would accordingly be amended.

Referring to option 2, a Member wished to know how the Council intended to extract the personal calls from business calls for audit purposes. The ICT Manager explained that this was about identifying certain individuals whose phone bills varied. The intention was to work with Service Managers so that they could collect the information from those particular staff. He felt

Neil
Fordham/
Mark
Broughton

Action By

that if this Policy was approved the phone bills would decline.

Following further questions with regard to other means of identifying personal calls from business calls, it was

RESOLVED that the Mobile Devices Policy be adopted as recommended by the Local Joint Consultative Committee, subject to:

- 1) option 1 of the report being applied;
- 2) clause 5.1.4 being removed from the policy; and
- 3) the policy being amended to take into account the legal issues surrounding cradles.

**Kevin
Rump**

49/08 CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE TRANSFORMATION (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Customer Programme Manager presented the revised report which was circulated at the meeting together with a further paper that provided Members with an example of what could happen if the Contact Centre did not extend its temporary staff contracts.

Members approval was sought to increase the establishment from 8 permanent customer contact centre officers to 15, and agree to the re-structure and training plan as recommended in 2.1 and 2.2 of the report.

The Customer Programme Manager explained the areas of work that the contact centre staff covered.

She felt that if Members were mindful to approve the recommendations it would deter contact centre staff from seeking employment elsewhere. It would create a permanent base to build on, reducing the time, cost and skills gaps created by the loss of temporary contracted staff. The Council would save money and deliver performance at the top quartile thus enhancing the Council's reputation in this field.

The Committee noted that bids had been made to Star Chamber in previous years requesting funding to staff the Contact Centre at the required permanent levels; however, each year temporary funding had been awarded rather than permanent funding. If the recommendations were approved, a bid would need to be put forward into this year's Star Chamber requesting the additional funding at budget time.

A Member questioned whether it was worth taking on permanent staff with the possible introduction of the LGR. In response, a Member felt that if this was approved it would not make any difference to the Council; it would just solidify what the Council had and would provide some permanency for staff until the LGR came into force.

The Committee was made aware that after two years temporary staff received pay and conditions equivalent to those of permanent employees. Members noted that the Chief Executive had made reference to divest the

	<u>Action By</u>
<p>Council of all temporary contracts. In clarifying this point, the Customer Programme Manager advised that the Chief Executive had purely referred to doing away with the chore of bidding for such temporary contracts year on year. The Chairman asked that the Chief Executive be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issue of temporary contracts within the Council.</p>	<p>Trevor Holden</p>
<p>RESOLVED that, subject to a successful Star Chamber bid for the additional funding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) the increase in establishment from 8 permanent customer contact centre officers to 15, an addition of 7 posts, be approved; and2) the re-structure and training plan be agreed.	<p>Monica Coffey/ Maxine O'Mahony/ Alison Batley</p>
<p>50/08 <u>NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 8)</u></p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 3 September 2008 in the Norfolk Room.</p>	<p>All to Note</p>
<p>51/08 <u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEM)</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that, under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it might involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
<p>52/08 <u>PAYMENT OF HONORARIA</u></p> <p>The Chairman introduced this item which sought the Committee's decision on whether honoraria should be paid to two employees. There was some concern with regard to the dates of the paper provided and therefore the reason for its urgency was questioned. There was also some concern as to whether the paper had been authorised by the correct Executive Member. The Chairman said that these matters would be investigated.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the honoraria payments to two staff members be approved.</p>	<p>Maxine O'Mahony</p>

The meeting closed at 11.40 am

CHAIRMAN