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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday, 28 March 2018 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Councillor M. Chapman-Allen (Chairman)	Mrs J. Hollis
Mr K. Martin (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Councillor C. Bowes	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr R. F. W. Brame	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr M. P. Brindle	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr K.S. Gilbert	

In Attendance

Donna Hall	- Licensing & Business Support Manager
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer BDC)
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer
Josie Hoven	- Licensing Officer

24/18 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

a) Taxi Licensing and the Equality Act 2010 (Minute No. 22/17)

Members asked if a list had been produced highlighting the vehicles that could carry wheelchairs. Donna Hall, the Licensing & Business Support Manager explained that a consultation process had to be carried out with the drivers to inform the Council if they had any medical exemptions to exclude them from carrying wheelchairs.

An email would be sent to Members when the list had been produced.

b) Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25/18 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Askew and Councillor Paul Darby.

Action By

DH

26/18 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

27/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

None declared.

28/18 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

None present.

29/18 TAXI LICENSING UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Members were provided with a presentation that covered:

- Cross border hiring
- Accessibility;
- Safeguarding; and
- Convictions and Suitability Policy

Cross Border Hiring

The Licensing & Business Support Manager explained that local authorities had very different standards in relation to this matter as there was no set policy on cross border hiring. For example, a customer may make a booking and have an operator from another authority pick them up.

Accessibility

This was about wheelchair provision and Government Working Groups were currently considering the following recommendations:

- Standardised disability awareness training;
- Information on how to **complain** about taxi and PHV services to be displayed
- Licensing authorities conduct an **accessibility review** at three year intervals;
- Licensing authorities should reconsider **rank design**.

Safeguarding

Government powers would be enacted to issue statutory guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults following a series of child sexual exploitation cases linked closely to taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This guidance was still waited; however, safeguarding training was already being provided.

Councillor Gilbert asked how quickly taxi drivers would receive this training. The Licensing & Business Support Manager explained that training was compulsory and if a driver did not attend then the case would be brought to a Panel meeting. It was noted that the next training session was being held in May 2018.

Action By

Convictions and Suitability Policy

- Consultation Feb/ March 2018
- Guidance to use as basis for local policy
- Previous convictions and other information
- Promotes consistency
- Prevents “licence shopping”
- Will feed into Breckland Taxi Policy review 2018

A National Database would be available from April 2018 and Licensing Officers would be given access to check whether drivers had any convictions/revocations etc.

Councillor Gilbert asked if the Council had lost an appeal to the magistrates. Members were informed that it was quite rare for a decision to be overturned.

The Licensing & Business Support Manager wanted Members to engage in the forthcoming Policy review once the guidance had been received. This matter would be discussed at a future meeting.

DH

30/18 UPDATE ON NEW ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Licensing & Business Support Manager presented the report.

The report advised Members of the **draft** regulations that would change the existing licensing regime for animal establishments. These new regulations were due to be implemented in October 2018.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 1.9.6 of the report and asked if the Licensing Team was able to limit the number of breeding bitches at the property and how this was monitored. Members were informed that the new legislation mentioned the number of ‘dogs’ on the premises regardless of the sex. This wording was felt to be quite vague. The Licensing Officer explained that the Team relied on the general public to report any concerns and the Team regularly visited the ‘Pets for Home’ website. Pedigree puppies were different as they had to be registered with the Kennel Club and then licensed by the Council; however, designer dogs did not. Further information on this matter was being investigated.

The Chairman asked if Breckland had or knew of any puppy farms. Members were informed that the Team was aware of 2 breeders with a large number of dogs on their premises which could prove difficult for the owners once the new regulations came into force.

Councillor Bowes asked about the law in respect of keeping wild and dangerous animals. Members were informed that the current legalisation would remain. There was a very long list of animals that fell under this category but was mainly about security and keeping them contained.

Councillor Gilbert raised concern about the dog snatching episodes in his Ward and asked if the Team had any information on this. The Licensing & Business Support Manager said that this would be a Police matter but if any intelligence was received it would be passed onto the Police.

Action By

The fee structure would have to be re-visited to administer the new regulations.

31/18 TEAM UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

Josie Hoven, the Licensing Officer had been very busy visiting all animal breeders and licences had been renewed.

A new scrap metal merchant had opened new premises on the Yaxham Road Industrial Estate in Dereham which was open to the public. The premises had been inspected to ensure that the company was following regulations of the Scrap Metal Act. Since the Act came into force there had been less issues to deal with and the majority of sites were very good in that respect.

Panel Hearings had been fairly quiet and only one had been held on 7 March 2018. This was in relation to a new driver with previous convictions.

The meeting closed at 10.55 am

CHAIRMAN