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LICENSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25 November 2015

Present: Councillor WJ Davies (Chair)

Councillors S Niblock M Sullivan
J Salter A Hodson
C Spriggs G Watt

Deputy: Councillor E Boulton (In place of L Fraser)

Apologies: Councillor Mrs PM Williams

17 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were requested to declare whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in the item on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

No such declarations were made.

18 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September, 2015, be approved.

19 POLLING STATIONS

The Head of Legal and Member Services introduced a report which provided details of necessary changes required in relation to three polling places within the Borough. The report sought approval for the continuation of the status quo for one of the polling places and of suitable alternatives and changes for the other two.

Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward – Polling District PA

The Electoral Services Officer circulated some objections which had been received from parents of pupils at Greasby Infant School objecting to the continued use of the school. A Member informed the Committee that the ward councillors were not in favour of a suggested alternative. In response to comments from Members, the Electoral Services Officer informed the meeting that the school was not capable of being divided unless an alternative room was used which had led to more complaints in the past from electors. There were no difficulties with access at this polling station

On a motion by Councillor Niblock, seconded by the Chair, it was –

Resolved – That Greasby Infant School, Barker Lane, remain the polling station for this district.

Moreton West and Saughall Massie Ward – Polling District YC

Members were informed that the current polling place for this district, Foxfield School, had now closed so an alternative was required. The offer of the Rainbow Café in Moreton Baptist Church was the best solution presented.

Responding to comments from Members, the Electoral Services Officer stated that there were a range of fees which were paid for the use of private buildings; £500 was by no means the highest. A portable station would cost in the region of £2,500 to £3,000.

The Chair commented that he was aware that Electoral Services always tried their best to get the best facilities at the lowest cost and he suggested that a report on the amounts paid for private halls be brought back to Committee within the next 12 months.

The Committee were informed that Ward Councillors were in agreement with the proposed new polling station subject to a review of the turnout and whether or not it was lower at the next election.

On a motion by Councillor Niblock, seconded by the Chair, it was –

Resolved - That the Rainbow Café room of Moreton Baptist Church should be the polling place for the YC polling district of Moreton West and Saughall Massie at the District Council Election on 5 May 2016 and at all future elections thereafter, subject to a review after the next election.

Pensby and Thingwall Ward – Polling District FB

Members were informed that the current polling place for this district, the Methodist Church in Seven Acres Road would be sold by May 2016 and that Thingwall Recreation Centre had been assessed as a suitable alternative.

Members expressed concern at the long 100 yard single carriage driveway at this alternative location and the car parking available and also the potential hazards this could cause particularly in the dark.

On a motion by Councillor Niblock, seconded by the Chair, it was –

Resolved – That this item be deferred for further discussions to take place between Electoral Services and the Thingwall Recreation Centre

and a report be brought back to the January, 2016 meeting or to a special meeting of this Committee.

20 **REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES**

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive was considered which gave details of two proposals for amendment of the current Hackney Carriage fare tariffs, subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process.

One proposal had been submitted by the Unite Hackney Carriage trade representatives and was referred to as Proposal A in appendices to the report. A second proposal had been submitted by a Hackney Carriage Driver, supported by a petition of 40 Hackney Carriage Drivers and was referred to as Proposal B in appendices to the report.

A petition from 19 Hackney Carriage Drivers had been received requesting that no amendments be made to the current Hackney Carriage fare tariffs. The Licensing Manager circulated copies of a further petition of 44 signatories against any proposed tariff increases.

Mr D Cummins of Unite Union, addressed the Committee and spoke in favour of proposal A with an amendment to reduce the first yardage of tariff 1 to 355 yards.

Mr J Scott addressed the Committee, speaking in favour of proposal B.

Mr L Grochowicki addressed the Committee and spoke against any proposed increases.

The Chair agreed to hear two further speakers and during the course of hearing the five speakers a further alternative proposal was put before the Committee as to the review of hackney carriage fares.

Members expressed their concern that additional proposals were being put before the Committee at this late stage.

The Licensing Manager clarified the position with regard to the metered taxi fares displayed in hackney carriages and that these were a maximum which could be charged, although drivers could charge customers less than the figure displayed on the meter.

Members expressed the view that they could only make a decision on the basis of the three alternatives contained within the report.

The Licensing Manager informed the Members that only one proposal could then be advertised which would be the subject of consultation and anyone would be able to object which would then lead to the matter coming back to

the Committee. If no objections were made then the proposal would come into effect on 17 December, 2015.

On a motion by Councillor Niblock, seconded by Councillor Hodson, it was –

Resolved (8:0) – That proposal A for an increase in Hackney Carriage Tariffs, be approved, subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process.

21 PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR LICENCE CONDITIONS

The Assistant Chief Executive sought Members' approval of revised Private Hire Operator Licence conditions. A review of Private Hire Operator Licence Conditions had been undertaken, the aim of which was to ensure that the licensing conditions were updated to take into account changes in technology and to provide effective protection for members of the public. The draft document had been subject to consultation at a meeting held with licensed Private Hire Operators and a final draft document had been developed incorporating feedback received from this consultation and was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Licensing Manager explained that the revised conditions now gave some flexibility as to the display of a telephone number in that with the increased use of other media such as smartphone / web apps these could also be displayed in place of, or as well as a telephone number.

Resolved – That the revised conditions for Private Hire Operator Licences be approved.

22 APPLICATIONS TO LICENSE NEW MAKES AND MODELS OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive was considered which detailed proposals to consider delegating the consideration of applications for the approval of new makes and models of vehicles to be licensed as Hackney Carriage Vehicles to the Licensing Panel.

On a motion by Councillor Niblock, seconded by Councillor Salter, it was –

Resolved – That the consideration of applications for the approval of new makes and models of vehicles to be licensed as Hackney Carriage Vehicles be delegated to the Licensing Panel.