

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** held on
Monday 10 October 2016 at 6.00 pm at the **Council Chamber, District
Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Michael Anderson

Vice Chairman Carol Lynch

Ruth Allen

Victor Lukaniuk

Chris Barker

Christine Mason

John Bloodworth

Nigel Roman

Brian Harvey

45. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Reg Silvester.

46. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes present at the meeting.

47. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

48. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2016 were accepted by the Committee as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman, with 8 voting for the motion and with 1 abstention.

49. **Local Air Quality Strategy: Progress Report 2015-2016 (Report No: LIC/FH/16/005)**

The Service Manager (Environmental Health Services) presented this report to the Committee which set out the work undertaken during 2015 to meet Local Air Quality regulations across the District.

Members were advised that transport contributed to the majority of Local Air Quality within Forest Heath. However, the Officer was pleased to report that the general trend was improving.

Paragraph 2.5 of Report No LIC/FH/16/005 set out the following conclusions from the strategic review of Local Air Quality management:

1. The new streamlined report, as recommended by Defra, to be adopted on a yearly basis;
2. The Air Quality Management Area in Newmarket be amended to exclude the High Street (as this was shown to be compliant) subject to external consultation; but with further evidence being required in respect of Old Station Road to confirm if this area was satisfactory, prior to revocation;
3. The Air Quality Strategy adopted by Forest Heath District Council in 2012 be allowed to lapse, as the information therein was now provided within annual reporting; and
4. Boroughs and Districts throughout Suffolk be committed to working together to improve working practices within Suffolk County Council Highways.

Councillor John Bloodworth drew attention to Page 25 of Appendix 2 and queried why there was not a monitoring location in Mildenhall along the road of Queensway.

The Environment Officer explained that the Council would be happy to alter monitoring locations based on local knowledge and he would pursue this directly with Councillor Bloodworth outside of the meeting.

Councillors Victor Lukaniuk and Christine Mason both spoke at length over the Air Quality concerns they had in respect of Brandon. The Committee were advised that in response to concerns raised some years ago, local Members were advised that the duelling works to the A11 would alleviate some of the Air Quality issues within Brandon caused by traffic.

However, the duelling had now been completed and it had not resulted in an improvement. Moreover, both Councillors also raised specific issues with the number of HGVs that continued to travel through Brandon.

Both Officers present advised the Committee that they were aware of the situation with regard to Brandon and had been in contact with Highways England and Suffolk County Council in connection with it. The issue with HGV usage also needed to be raised with Highways England in order for them to apply pressure on HGV companies to recalibrate their satellite navigation systems.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health Services) agreed to discuss the monitoring provision within Brandon in order to evidence the issue. He would pursue this directly, outside of the meeting, with Councillors Lukaniuk and Mason.

It was moved by Councillor John Bloodworth, seconded by Councillor Ruth Allen and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That external consultation be undertaken on the proposal to amend the declared area of the Air Quality Management Area in Newmarket.

50. **Training for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers
(Report No: LIC/FH/16/006)**

The Licensing Team Leader presented the results of the consultation that was undertaken earlier in the year on whether a Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC) Level 2 qualification should be implemented for all new and existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers.

The Committee was advised that the consultation wasn't purely targeted at drivers; with members of the public also making representations. The drivers that had responded to the consultation were not completely adverse; with the main concern being the cost of the course.

Members were informed that other Councils had adopted the BTEC for their registered drivers and had found it very useful as it addressed issues such as safeguarding and provided guidance on how to support vulnerable people.

All Members who made comment on the report supported the recommendation, including the Vice-Chairman who had to withdraw from the meeting prior to the conclusion of this item.

In respect of Recommendation 2 (as set out in Report No LIC/FH/16/006) the Officer advised the meeting that she would recommend that the timeframe for current drivers to complete the course would be two years.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor John Bloodworth and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the approval of Cabinet and Council, the results of the recent consultation with Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Vehicle Drivers and taxi customers, on the proposal to adopt a BTEC Level 2 Certificate 'Introduction to the Role of the Professional Tax and Private hire Driver' for all new and existing drivers, be noted and:

1. The change in requirements for all new drivers to complete the BTEC Level 2 Certificate be approved; and
2. The change in the requirements for all current drivers to complete the BTEC Level 2 Certificate within two years be approved.

(Councillor Carol Lynch left the meeting at 6.32pm during the preliminary discussion of this item and prior to the voting thereon.)

51. **Urgent Business**

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook – Update (Verbal)

The Licensing Team Leader, with the consent of the Chairman, took this opportunity to advise the Committee that Officers were working on updating the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook, following which consultation would commence on the amendments with drivers and Members.

She welcomed input from the Committee on the content, with the aim being for a report to be presented to the meeting on 23 January 2017.

The meeting concluded at 6.44 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
