

**Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
held on 23 February 2017**

PRESENT -

Councillor Graham Dudley (Chairman); Councillor David Wood (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Michael Arthur, Tina Mountain, Martin Olney, Clive Smitheram, Jean Steer and Mike Teasdale (as nominated substitute for Councillor David Reeve)

Absent: Councillor Chris Frost, Councillor Rob Geleit and Councillor David Reeve

Officers present: Mark Berry (Head of Place Development), Rachel Jackson (Licensing, Grants and HIA Manager), Karol Jakubczyk (Planning Policy Manager) and Sandra Dessent (Democratic Services Officer)

20 QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked or had been submitted by members of the public.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors regarding items on the Agenda.

22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by Chairman.

23 PETITION REGARDING TAXI RANK PROVISION IN EPSOM

The Committee was informed that as part of Surrey County Council's Plan E Highway Improvement Scheme changes were being made to improve the market place and surrounding roads and junctions. This required the relocation of the taxi rank near to the Clocktower to another location on the High Street. It was noted that whilst Epsom and Ewell Borough Council had responsibility for deciding the taxi rank location, it was probable that it would be in the location shown on the County Council's Phasing Plan for the scheme, ie: outside TK Maxx in place of the current bus stand which was being moved.

The Epsom Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association had anticipated that the decision to re-locate would be made in favour of the Plan E proposals, and had submitted a petition in two parts, one signed by members of the public and the second by licensed taxi drivers, with a combined total of 522 signatures.

The Committee was informed that the representations contained in the petitions would officially be taken into consideration at the time of the decision being made, which would trigger the commencement of the formal statutory process. At that point members of the public would be invited to comment on the submission of a Road Traffic Order. However, it was felt appropriate for Members to be informed of the representations prior to submission.

To that end, the Committee noted two verbal representations from the Epsom Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, who had concluded that if the taxi rank were to be located outside of TK Maxx it would adversely impact the drivers and the service currently provided to people using the Ashley centre. There were also concerns expressed regarding the retention of a private hire operator with an office in the Clocktower.

The Committee whilst not in a position to influence the decision to move the taxi rank were sympathetic to the concerns expressed in the representations and the speakers were assured that they would be informed as soon as the details of the formal statutory process were confirmed. At that point they would have the opportunity to repeat (and expand if desired) on their representations.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed the recommendations to note the petitions and that the representations contained in the petitions be taken into account before any decision was made about whether to re-locate the taxi rank.

24 ONLINE DBS UPDATE SERVICE

The Committee was asked to consider the implementation of online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, in addition to the existing paper disclosures. It was noted that the proposed online scheme was the most efficient and cost effective way of undertaking the statutory checks, for both the Council and the applicant.

It was proposed to amend the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy to include the introduction of online DBS checks and Members were requested to review the additional wording in the document and a further minor amendment suggested in the meeting.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to the recommendations set out in the report, as follows:

- (1) The implementation of an online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedure for new applicants and existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.
- (2) The amendment of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy as set out in paragraph 1(c) with an additional amendment agreed at the meeting, as follows:

Paragraph 1(c), line 5, remove the word '**solely**'.

25 CORPORATE PLAN: PERFORMANCE REPORT TWO 2016 TO 2017

The Committee was asked to consider the second report of 2016/2017 that measured key priority performance targets under the new Corporate Plan.

It was reported that since the publication of the agenda there had been one further update, i.e.: the Green Belt Study had been delayed and would be presented to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee at a future meeting. The Chairman acknowledged that lack of staff resources had affected work flow, but noted that new staff in place had positively impacted the situation.

The Committee agreed that the performance targets for 2016/2017 had been well thought out and successfully reflected the speed and quality of decision making for planning applications.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- (1) Considered the performance reported in Annexe 1 to the report and did not identify any areas of concern;
- (2) Considered the actions that had been proposed or taken where performance was currently a concern as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

26 GOVERNMENT HOUSING WHITE PAPER 'FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET' - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee noted the publication of the Government white paper, 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' and a brief summary of the key points proposed by the government, as follows:

- New national methodology for assessing and planning the housing needs target.
- Speed up building rates
- Measures to diversify the housing market

It was agreed that officers would prepare a more detailed brief of the proposed reforms and the potential impact on the Local Plan programme at the next Members' Briefing scheduled for 30 March. It was proposed that a subsequent report setting out the draft comments on the Housing White Paper will come before the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee at the next meeting in April.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.40 pm

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM DUDLEY (CHAIRMAN)