

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 23 March 2001)

1. ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 25)

The Committee has considered proposals to implement new arrangements for licensing smaller animal boarding establishments and associated charging. The relevant legislation requires that anybody keeping an animal boarding establishment needs to be licensed. Several people in the District have been running small businesses looking after animals within the confines of their own homes without the required licence. The current fee for full-time animal boarding house establishment licences is £150. The Committee considered that such a fee would be prohibitive for small scale businesses operated as a sideline. For that reason, the Committee has agreed that in the case of people who look after a maximum of three animals within their own domestic dwellings, a reduced licence fee of £35 be charged.

The Committee has also agreed conditions to be attached to the licensing of these animal boarding establishments.

The premises which are to be used as boarding establishments for animals will be inspected prior to any licence being granted. There are a number of businesses acting as agents for smaller animal boarding establishments but these do not require licences unless they actually accommodate animals.

Licences are not required for private arrangements between neighbours or friends as these are not boarding establishments is being run "as a business". Licences issued will note that the licence itself does not constitute planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Committee has asked that its decision be given appropriate publicity.

2. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING - PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND ISSUE OF LICENCES (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 26)

The Committee has considered a proposal to upgrade the system by which the Council administers and issues Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle licences.

Computerisation has allowed opportunities to enhance the system to the advantage of both licence holders and the Council. Currently, vehicle licensing is carried out on a fixed-year basis which begins on 1 June each year and ends on the last day of May the following year. The Committee has agreed that the existing 254 vehicle licences and all vehicles thereafter be issued on a "rolling calendar" basis where each licence issued is for a full year, irrespective of the date on which it is issued. This avoids the need to deal with a large work peak during the month of May when licences are generally renewed and exterior and interior licence plates are also issued for each vehicle.

The fleet of vehicles will be licensed twice, initially for part of a year (depending upon the allocated group) and, thereafter, for a full year.

During the first year, all vehicles will be re-licensed for a year but each group would initially apply to license their vehicles for a different length of time, with a second application being made later in the year for a full twelve month licence.

Existing legislation does not permit a licence to be issued for a period longer than one year. There are no major financial implications to the proposals, as vehicle licensing income would be spread evenly over the whole year.

**3. FOOT AND MOUTH CRISIS - RIDING ESTABLISHMENTS
(MINUTE NO. 29)**

The Committee has considered the implications of the foot and mouth precautions on riding schools within the District. They currently pay an annual licensing fee to the Council but many such businesses have been heavily hit by the recent ban of riding in the New Forest which has led to a drastic reduction in income.

The Committee recognised the serious implications of the foot and mouth precautions on a wide range of local businesses who are likely to request financial assistance from the Council and has drawn the attention of Policy and Resources Committee and the Advisory Cabinet to this issue.

The Committee believes that the levying of the annual licence fee should be deferred until 2 months after riding schools are once again permitted to use the New Forest.

Cllr J M Hoy
CHAIRMAN