

**8 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Friday, 8 September 2017

- \* Cllr S J Clarke (Chairman)
- \* Cllr L R Puttock (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- \* G C Beck
- \* G R Blunden
- \* S P Davies
- \* Ms L C Ford
- \* R L Frampton
- A T Glass
- \* L E Harris

**Councillors:**

- \* Mrs P Jackman
- \* J M Olliff-Cooper
- \* D N Tungate
- \* A S Wade
- \* J G Ward
- \* Mrs P A Wyeth

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

B Byrne, Mrs J McClay and Ms M Stephens

**Apologies:**

Cllr Glass

**9 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with an agenda item.

**11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**12 TRAINING FOR THE TAXI TRADE - PRESENTATION**

The Committee considered changes to the Drivers' Awareness Test which must be passed by all hackney carriage and private hire driver applicants in order to obtain a drivers licence.

In developing the new test, the Council had undertaken a benchmarking exercise with other authorities to ensure that the Council's test questions were set at an appropriate level.

The test had five key elements, namely; basic Highway Code, English and numeracy skills, geographical knowledge of the New Forest, relevant law and regulations and safeguarding.

The safeguarding model was a new element of the test and had been developed in-house by the Council's Partnership Intervention Manager. The model had been developed, to ensure that there was a minimal standard to safeguarding for taxi drivers across Hampshire. This was an online assessment model with 10 scenario based questions. The system had been designed to self-manage to ensure that different questions were generated per applicant per test. The centralised learning package could also identify individuals to see whether they had taken tests in other authority areas and was able to generate test data.

Members were tested on a few sample questions to help them understand the level and breadth of knowledge new applicants would be expected to have. Members expressed the view that the questions were challenging for the applicants and set a good standard.

The Committee congratulated the Environment and Regulation Service Manager and the Partnership Intervention Manager on the development of the test, in particular the safeguarding model which was a significant piece of work for safeguarding in the County.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee endorse the new knowledge test with the safeguarding training module and recognise the positive outcome of implementing it with all new applicants;
- (b) That the Committee supports the future roll-out of the safeguarding training for all existing drivers and operators; and
- (c) That a letter be sent to the Council's Chief Executive expressing the Committee's praise and support of the work of the Council's safeguarding team for the development of the driver awareness test safeguarding model.

**13 LICENSING SERVICE PLAN**

The Committee considered the Licensing Service Plan for 2017/18 which highlighted the priorities for the team until the end of March 2018.

Members were informed that the key priorities listed in the plan would be completed in the next six months. Amongst this was the review of the Council's taxi licensing policy which officers would be drafting and sending out for consultation with Members approval at the end of the financial year.

The Committee were pleased to note an update of the revised structure of Licensing Services which appeared to place them well for the future.

**RESOLVED:**

That the priorities set out in the Licensing Service Plan for this financial year be approved.

**14 DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the scheme of delegation of powers to officers be updated as follows: -

- (a) That the Council's scheme of delegation of powers to officers be amended replacing the words "licensing officer" with "Licensing Manager"; and
- (b) That the Committee delegate its function of determining Hackney Carriage and Private Hire and Operator licence applications made under S.51 & S.55 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to a Sub-Committee of three members drawn from the General Purposes & Licensing Committee.

**15 DATES OF MEETINGS 2018/19**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee meets on the following dates in 2018/18 (all Fridays at 9.30 a.m.):-

8 June 2018  
7 September 2018  
16 November 2018  
11 January 2019  
8 March 2019

CHAIRMAN