
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE 11/09/17

Present:

Present: Councillors, Steve Collings, Annwen Daniels, Annwen Hughes, Eryl Jones-Williams, Dafydd Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Jason W Parry, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Elfed W. Williams and Gareth Williams

Also in Attendance: Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Environment Manager), Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager), Geraint B. Edwards (Solicitor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors John Brynmor Jones and Dewi Wyn Roberts

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams referred to a confidential letter he had received which included complaints about the Licensing Department from an applicant who had been late submitting an application. The letter was presented to the Licensing Department so they could respond to the letter officially through the complaints procedure. The Licensing Manager noted that the Department had already spoken with the applicant and had explained the reasons for refusing his application

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee that took place on 19 June 2017, as a true record.

5. GENERAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Submitted - for information, the minutes of a meeting of the Central Licensing Sub-committee held on 11.7.17

6. REVIEW OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL TAXI POLICIES

Submitted – the report of the Head of Environment Department asking the Committee for its support to accept the general direction of the review prior to holding a public consultation. The proposal was to create a unified Gwynedd Council Taxi Policy rather than three separate policy documents. The policy would include: 'Suitability Criteria for

Drivers and Operators', guidelines on deciding whether a person was 'suitable and appropriate' to be a driver or operator and licence and vehicle standard conditions.

Attention was drawn to the high-level proposed changes to the policies and driver and vehicle conditions along with the five high-level offers driving the new policy, in the report.

It was reiterated that the changes to the current Licensing Policy would provide a consistent and fair service across the County and would meet the needs of the industry and users and reflect the Ffordd Gwynedd principles.

Members were given an opportunity to consider whether or not any other matters needed to be addressed before the formal consultation was commenced.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were made by individual Members:

- A suggestion to consider the need for every taxi driver to have a standard First Aid qualification.
- Need to ensure a sufficient supply of vehicles that were wheelchair-accessible - consider the long-term vision so that every vehicle had space for a wheelchair.
- Set a higher target for Gwynedd for the percentage of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

In the context of conditions relevant to stretch limousines, attention was drawn to the need to re-phrase the conditions to ensure that they complied with the Road Traffic Act.

In response to the comments, the Licensing Manager noted that there was an opportunity to consider including basic First Aid in the qualification pack. It was noted that this would be good practice, despite the need to ensure that excessive expectations were not placed on the drivers.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the Licensing Unit had recently held training for drivers on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It was noted that every driver had to attend the training in order to comply with policy.

In response to an observation regarding having a sufficient supply of wheelchair-accessible vehicles, attention was drawn to the need to consult with the industry as this would place high expectations on them. The cooperation and compliance of the industry would need to be ensured in order to move on. Any substantial long-term changes would need to be phased-in.

RESOLVED to accept the report, and for the Licensing Department to consider and act upon the observations before holding a public consultation.

The meeting commenced at 10.45 am and concluded at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN