

Licensing Committee

held at Ryedale House, Malton
on Thursday 23 July 2009

Present

Councillors, Cowling, Frank, Hope, Hemesley (Chairman) and Woodward

In Attendance

Mrs B Bennett, Mrs F Brown, Mrs L Hayes, Mrs M Jackson,

Minutes

10 **Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11 June 2009**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11 June 2009 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record

11 **Exempt Information**

Resolved:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 4 on the agenda (Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Sub committee held on 7 July 2009) as they contained information concerning an individual.

12 **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 7 July 2009**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 7 July 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13 **Urgent Business**

The Chairman reported that there were no items to be considered as a matter of urgency by virtue of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

14 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

PART 'A' ITEMS - Matters to be dealt with under delegated powers or matters determined by Committee.

15 Appeal, Private Hire Driver Licence

Members considered a report which informed them that an appeal had been received from an applicant who had an application for a Private Hire Driver Licence refused

Members were requested to arrange a special meeting of the Licensing Committee to hear the appeal.

Resolved:

That a special meeting of the Licensing Committee be held on 11 August 2009 to hear the appeal

16 Taxi Licensing Member Task Group Recommendations

Members considered a report, which made recommendations to the committee following a meeting of the Taxi Licensing Member Task Group on 1 July 2009.

In 2005-06 the Council had adopted a policy to achieve a cost neutral taxi licensing service over a 5 year period which had required annual increases of between 10-20% to the license fees.

Last year (08/09) saw an increase in staff costs and a small drop in the number of licences issued compared to budget, which resulted in an increase in the net cost of providing the service. It is also forecast that staff costs will continue at the existing levels to ensure workload requirements are efficiently and effectively delivered.

The main reasons for the increase in staff costs are the management and supervision essential to support the part-time taxi licensing officer who has a growing caseload involving investigations, complaints and appeals together with developing policies to keep abreast with legislation, working with others including other local authorities, the police and VOSA, servicing various groups including the Task Group and the Committee, as well as regular administration and enforcement duties.

The cost of providing the service was £49,000 a year and the current level of income was forecast at £35,500. The forecast for 2009/10 represented an increase of £6,750 in the net cost to the general fund to £12,910 compared with the original budget position of £6150.

In view of the current economic climate, together with the level of staff costs required to provide the existing level of service, the reasonableness and ability to achieve a cost neutral policy is now under question.

The Member Task Group also concluded that an initial exploratory review into alternative ways of providing the service should be recommended to provide further information on the potential options to ensure value for money for the taxi licensing service.

Resolved:

That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended that:-

- (i) a change is made to the existing cost neutral policy for the taxi licensing service and a revised aim “to deliver an efficient and effective taxi licensing service at a minimal cost to the council tax payer” is set; and
- (ii) a review is undertaken to identify alternative options for delivering the Taxi Licensing Service which seek to ensure that economy, efficiency and effectiveness is secured for the future.

PART ‘B’ ITEMS - Matters referred to Council

There were no Part ‘B’ items to be considered.

The meeting started at 8.20 pm and finished at 8.35 pm

The foregoing minutes were signed at a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 24 September 2009 in pursuance of a resolution for the purpose passed at such meeting.

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Chairman.