

Medway Council
Meeting of Licensing and Safety Committee
Tuesday, 10 December 2024
6.00pm to 6.34pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: McDonald (Chairperson), Browne (Vice-Chairperson), Fearn, Field, Filmer, Hamilton, Kemp, Peake and Sands

In Attendance: Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer
Mandy Francis, Licensing Manager
Mark Lees, Regulatory Services Manager, Gravesham Borough Council, Gravesham and Medway Shared Licensing Service
Vicky Nutley, Head of Legal Services

518 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brake and Howcroft-Scott.

519 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 6 August 2024 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

520 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

521 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

522 Gravesham and Medway Shared Licensing Service Update

Discussion:

The Licensing Manager summarised the contents of the report for the Committee and explained that the Licensing Team was now fully staffed, and a new permanent structure was in place as shown at Annex 3 to the report.

The Committee were informed that as well as covering licensing workloads for both Medway and Gravesham, being fully staffed allowed the Licensing Team to cover any new Licensing regimes, work collaboratively with key services and partners, progress the shared service and continue with debt collection for the recovery of unpaid fees and enforcement visits.

Members queried the role of the Licensing Team with regards to enhanced digital services in Medway and were informed that all digital services were hosted by Gravesham Borough Council.

The Committee were informed that debt collection and compliance and enforcement visits continue. The way debt collection was undertaken was explained to the Committee and officers agreed to provide further detail on the costs of debt collection in future reports.

Members discussed the benefits from the shared service and whether there was any way to measure the improvements in service delivery that had been made since the service had been delivered as a shared service. The Head of Community Protection explained that whilst he did not have comparable data or KPIs for the service before and after the creation of the shared service, officers could provide reassurance by providing service level data for the Committee. It was agreed that the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Opposition Spokesperson would explore this further outside the meeting with the Head of Community Protection and Licensing Manager.

Decision:

The Committee noted and commented on the report as set out in Appendix A and agreed to explore the provision of service level data to the Committee outside of the meeting.

523 Hackney Carriage Tariff Review Policy

Discussion:

The Licensing Manager informed the Committee that the Hackney Carriage Taxi Tariff Review Policy had been produced in consultation with key officers and Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (MLTDA) and approval was being sought to undertake consultation on the policy.

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Members queried the end date for the consultation period (26 January 2024) in section 7.2 of the report and the Licensing Manager explained that this was an error and should be 26 January 2025.

The Licensing Manager explained that the consultation period would include all Licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers in Medway and after the consultation period the Committee would be informed of the results at a future meeting.

Members discussed whether tariff reviews should be bi-annual or annual and the Licensing Manager explained that tariff review requests in the past had never been as frequent as annually and there had been 4 years between reviews in the past. The Committee concluded that this could be considered further when the policy returns to the Committee after the consultation period.

Members queried whether Christmas tariff reviews would be included in the proposed policy. The Committee were informed that this was not included in the policy as to embed Christmas tariffs permanently into the Medway tariff card required a separate statutory process. Officers planned to formally review the tariffs in 2025 so that the Christmas tariffs could be permanently added to the Medway tariff card before Christmas 2025.

Decision:

The Committee approved the proposed Hackney Carriage Tariff Review Policy for consultation and agreed to officers proceeding with the same.

Chairperson

Date:

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