
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE 1/12/15

Present: Eryl Jones-Williams (Chair)
W. Tudor Owen (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Annwen Daniels, Ann Williams, R. H. Wyn Williams, John Brynmor Hughes, Angela Russell and Elfed Williams

OFFICERS: Geraint Brython Edwards (Solicitor), Lowri Haf Evans (Members and Scrutiny Support Officer), Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Environment Service Manager) and Sheryl Le Bon Jones (Operational Systems Manager - Public Protection)

1. APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman, Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams. Apologies were received from Councillors Craig ab Iago, Annwen Hughes, Louise Hughes, Dilwyn Lloyd and Peter Read.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 14 September 2015, as a true record.

5. GENERAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Submitted, for information, the minutes of the meetings of the General Licensing Sub-committee held on 02.09.15 and 03.11.15.

6. REVISION OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S POLICIES

- Combined Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licence Policy
- Hackney Carriages/Private Hire Vehicles Licensing Policy
- Private Hire Operators Licensing Policy

An oral update from the Licensing Manager was provided on the work of reviewing the licensing policies to create a unified policy. Members were

reminded that in the committee meeting held on 14 September 2015 they had:

- authorised the Head of the Regulatory Department to begin a review of the licensing policies in relation to operators, hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and drivers.
- supported the general direction of Proposals 1 to 5 as a starting point for the review.

It was noted that The Cabinet had agreed with the principles and the need to reconcile the current policies. It was confirmed that the Licensing Unit had begun reviewing the policies and that the research work had already revealed matters that required attention.

One of the matters was the existence of 'by-laws'. It was noted that the current policies had been accepted in 2010, although it was in 2003 that they had been reviewed in their entirety. In the 2003 version, conditions refer to the by-laws, but in the 2010 adaptation there is no reference to these by-laws. By collaborating with the Legal Unit, it was discovered that the by-laws continued to be in existence, and therefore it must be ensured that these match with the policies coherently and correctly. Members were reminded that there must be by-laws in order to ensure conditions for hackney carriage drivers.

Matters arising from the discussion,

- ensuring clarity and control in the context of by-laws
- agreeing that the policies need to be tidied to reduce confusion
- looking at what other Councils are implementing.

An observation was made on the use of 'orange wallets', where it was suggested to include 'training on support for vulnerable / disabled / blind customers' as a taxi driver condition. In response, it was noted that some Councils were already adopting the training as a condition and that it was possible for Gwynedd to consider this as part of the knowledge test that every driver must complete.

In an observation on the possible changes to the Immigration Bill, where an applicant, when making an application for a taxi driver licence, will have to show evidence of his/her right to work in the country and no 'immigration offence,' it was noted that the policies would need to be modified subject to the House of Commons' decision.

RESOLVED

Support the Licensing Unit to continue with their review of the licensing policies by collaborating with the Legal Unit to ensure clarity and control over the by-laws.

That there is a need to adopt 'training on support for vulnerable / disabled / blind customers' as a taxi driver condition and as part of the knowledge test that must be completed.

The Licensing Unit were thanked for their work.

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm and concluded at 3.30 pm

CHAIRMAN