

# Licensing Committee

## Wednesday, 14 December 2016

**Attendees:** Councillor Roger Buston, Councillor Nick Cope, Councillor John Elliott, Councillor Mike Hogg, Councillor Darius Laws, Councillor Patricia Moore, Councillor Lee Scordis, Councillor Jessica Scott-Boutell

**Substitutes:** Councillor Rosalind Scott (for Councillor Dave Harris)

### 13 Minutes

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 14 Member Training Review

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Professional Services requesting that the Committee consider changes to the Member Development Programme for Licensing Committee to ensure it meets the needs of members and the operational needs of the service whilst being provided as soon as possible.

Sarah White, Licensing Officer, introduced the report and highlighted the issues that had arisen in respect of the member development programme for the Licensing Committee as set out in the Appendix to the Head of Professional Services report.

In discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Whether there was scope to condense the training offered to members. Given that licensing training was very intense and time consuming, was there the possibility of looking at a one full day of training, with the possibility of this being scheduled for a weekend day? Officers advised that it would be very difficult to find an external trainer who would be willing to provide training on a weekend.
- Members stressed the need for training dates to be circulated to members as soon as they were available.
- The requirement for Councillors to observe two Hackney Carriage and two Licensing Sub-Committee hearings can be problematic for some Councillors due to work commitments and also the unpredictable nature of hearings. This meant that it was difficult for members of the Committee to become fully trained, and as a result the hearings in the current Municipal Year had been considered by a small group of

members. Therefore the Committee agreed to reduce the requirement for observation to one Hackney carriage and one Licensing Sub-Committee hearing. Members agreed that there would be benefit in using recordings or mock hearings for training purposes.

- Some of the difficulties in member availability for Licensing Sub Committee hearings could be addressed by holding some of the more straightforward, and therefore shorter, meetings in the evening.
- The rota system for empanelling of members be re-introduced for Sub-Committee and Hackney Carriage hearings. The requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 meant that it was not possible to give more than 2-3 week's notice and it was acknowledged that this presented difficulties for Councillors. It was therefore considered that it would be better to return to the rota system and for the dates of hearings to be given in advance, as it is easier to cancel dates rather than add them in.
- It was suggested that there could be some merit in looking at branding the training or presenting it as a qualification in order to demonstrate its value.

The Committee asked that officers consider the views expressed and ensure that they were taken into account in preparing a training programme for future municipal years so that members appointed to the Committee were quickly able to take on the full duties of a member of the Licensing Committee.

The Committee felt very strongly that the political groups needed to be aware of the training requirements for the Licensing Committee and the current difficulties in scheduling members for meetings so this could be taken into consideration when making nominations to the Committee in future. It was important that members of the Committee raised these issues within their political groups

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) Officers consider the views expressed and ensure that they were taken into account in preparing a training programme for future municipal years so that members appointed to the Committee were quickly able to take on the full duties of a member of the Licensing Committee.
- (b) The Member Development Programme for the Licensing Committee be amended so that the number of observations required for training purposes be reduced to 1 for Hackney/Carriage appeals and 1 for Licensing Sub-Committee hearings with immediate effect.
- (c) The rota system for empaneling of members be re-introduced for Sub-Committee and Hackney Carriage hearings.

