

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Wednesday 9th July 2014 at 6.00 pm at the Business Development Centre, Stafford Park, Telford

PRESENT

Councillors C Mason (Chair), T Hope, L Murray, J Pinter, J Seymour and C Turley

Officers in attendance: L Noakes (Assistant Director: Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection), M Cumberbatch (Legal Services Manager), C Phillips (Licensing Technical Officer) and P Smith (Democratic Services Team Leader)

Access could not be gained to the designated meeting room. The Chair formally opened and then adjourned the meeting, in order for Members and Officers to relocate to an alternative meeting room at Darby House, Telford Town Centre.

The meeting re-convened at 6.15pm at Darby House.

LC-1 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 12th March 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LC-2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors A Mackenzie, R Scammell, B J Thompson and K Tomlinson

LC-3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC-4 PROPOSAL TO LICENCE RICKSHAWS AS HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

The Licensing Technical Officer presented the report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection, which detailed an application to licence three rickshaws as Hackney Carriage Vehicles (HCVs).

An application had been received to licence three rickshaws along specified routes based on the Silkin Way within the Town Park and between the Town Park and locations in the Ironbridge Gorge. All of the designated routes were based on existing cycle routes. A copy of the application and the applicants' business proposal were appended to the report. The Licensing Service had discussed the proposal with the applicants, and offered advice on what criteria would be required. Case law had determined that a pedi cab (or rickshaw) was a Hackney Carriage Vehicle for the purposes of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 if the rickshaw was to be used to ply for hire and reward. Therefore, if the application was approved, the rickshaws

would need to display a HCV plate and be fully insured. Following discussion with the applicants, a number of Licence conditions were being suggested, and these were set out in the report.

Also appended to the report were details of the specified routes that the applicants intended to operate, and the Licensing Technical Officer advised of the proposed fare tariffs that had been provided by the applicants in relation to each route. These were flat-rate charges irrespective of the number of passengers. Any separate tariff for rickshaws would require advertising and a period of consultation would be undertaken. In terms of the general proposal for licensed rickshaws, the applicants had consulted the Town Park, the Council's Highways department and Rights of Way Officer, and The Gorge Parish Council, none of whom had raised any objections. In response to a question, the Licensing Technical Officer confirmed that part of the proposed routes would involve travel on main roads, but there had not been any adverse comments on this from Highways.

The applicants, Mr S Singh and Mr J Lewis-Owen, were present and were invited by the Chair to make a statement in support of their application. The applicants explained how they had come up with the idea, provided details of their business model and stated that the rickshaw journeys would enhance the visitor experience in Telford and help promote the town and its history. In response to questions from Members, the applicants confirmed that the rickshaws would have a small battery powered motor and that journeys could be pre-booked as well as by hailing them along the routes. The Licensing Technical Officer added that there would be a clearly defined "start point" in the Town Park, and that a "finish point" in the Ironbridge Gorge was being negotiated. In terms of operating times, the applicants confirmed that it would be an all year round operation, but that trade would be focussed on the summer months and at holiday times/special occasions. Reference was made to some of the specified journeys being along multi-user routes, and that the applicants needed to be aware of the presence of horses, cyclists and pedestrians on these routes.

The applicants then left the room while the Committee determined the application. Members were supportive of two young entrepreneurs who had come up with an innovative business proposal that would also benefit tourism and enhance the facilities in the Town Park. It was felt that the proposed conditions would satisfactorily ensure the safety of passengers. In terms of the fare tariffs, it was confirmed that there would be a fixed rate fare structure and this would need to be clearly displayed. The Licensing Technical Officer also confirmed that the drivers of the rickshaws would need to be licensed. Having considered all the information that had been presented to the Committee, and the responses given by the applicants to Members' questions, it was

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the application to licence three rickshaws as Hackney Carriage Vehicles be approved, subject to:**
 - i) the attachment of the conditions set out at paragraph 4.1.5 of the report; and**

ii) the use of the rickshaws being limited to the designated routes shown at Appendix B of the report.

(b) that the proposed fare tariffs be approved for consultation.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.

Chairman:

Date: