

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the LICENSING AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE held in the GROUND FLOOR MEETING ROOMS (CONINGSBY AND BOURN), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 19 March 2025

PRESENT: Councillor N Wells – Chair.

Councillors M L Beuttell, J Clarke, A E Costello, S J Criswell, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, S A Howell, P A Jordan and P Kadewere.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Banks and D Terry.

14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th October 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15 MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

16 CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Committee gave consideration to a report by the Public Protection Manager to which was appended the revised Corporate Enforcement Policy. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book. The Policy had been reviewed following an Audit of enforcement activity, which had recommended the review was undertaken. In introducing the report, the Public Protection Manager highlighted the areas of activity covered by the Policy and stressed that functions not covered by it were subject to their own legislation and associated procedures. The Policy took into account best practice. Generally, the Council's approach was to work with the subjects of allegations to seek a resolution.

Councillor Beuttell asked whether the Policy covered Civil Parking Enforcement. In response, the Committee was advised that this fell outside the Corporate Enforcement Policy. It was then

RESOLVED

- a) that the revised Corporate Enforcement Policy be approved;
- b) that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection to make minor editorial changes to the Corporate Enforcement Policy should this be deemed necessary, and
- c) that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, after consultation with the relevant Executive

Councillors, to make amendments to operating procedures in light of changes resulting from revocations, amendments, or enactments of relevant statutory provisions; changes in statutory guidance, or best practice.

17 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER - ST NEOTS, EYNESBURY

Pursuant to Minute No 24/9, the Committee gave consideration to a report by the Community Safety Partnership Delivery Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the outcome of a further review of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in a localised area of Eynesbury, St Neots. Members were informed that in the period from October to December 2024 five breaches of the Order had been identified. Since then, no breaches had been found but one had occurred since the report had been published. The Police were of the view that the impact of the PSPO had been positive and there had been no complaints of breaches. However, it was accepted that levels of anti-social behaviour tended to be lower in the winter. The Order would be in place until 2027.

Councillor Ferguson commented that owing to residents' concerns the introduction of the PSPO had been justified. In response to a question by Councillor Ferguson the Committee was informed that the length of the time the camera was retained would be determined by the identified demand for it. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

18 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER - RAMSEY

Further to Minute No 24/8, the Committee received and noted a report by the Community Safety Partnership Delivery Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing the findings of the second review of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in respect of the localised area of the Great Whyte, Ramsey. Members were reminded that the PSPO had been in place since 7th November 2024.

The report indicated that there had been one breach of the PSPO in January and February 2025. The Police patrolled the area and had stated that there had been reductions in street drinkers and in calls for service. There had been positive feedback on the impact of the PSPO including from the Town Council.

Members commented on the beneficial effect the PSPO had achieved and on the support from the police through a partnership approach. In response to a question by the Chair, it was confirmed that the CCTV camera was a permanent instalment. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

19 LICENSING AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE - SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

The Committee gave consideration to a report by the Licensing Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on an update to the Scheme of Delegation following changes to the internal structure of the Licensing Service. The changes were required to reduce the risk of decisions being reversed following legal challenge on the grounds that Officers had not been appropriately authorised to take those decisions.

Following a comment by Councillor Ferguson that the Scheme of Delegation illustrated the range of functions the Licensing Service carried out, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the Scheme of Delegation from Licensing and Protection Committee to Officers appended to the report now submitted be approved;
- b) that the Public Protection Manager be authorised to make minor editorial changes which by definition make no change to the powers of delegations;
- c) that the Public Protection Manager, after consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Licensing and Protection Committee, be authorised to make changes as a result of revocations, amendments, or enactment of relevant statutory provisions, and
- d) that the Public Protection Manager be authorised to appoint such suitably qualified officers as deemed appropriate to exercise those duties delegated to him.

20 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES

The Committee received and noted a report by the Licensing Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions, which had been taken under delegated authority during the period 1st October 2024 to 1st March 2025. Members' attention was drawn to the number of vehicle licenses that had been suspended following a change to way Officers treated vehicles with defects that had safety implications for passengers. The report also contained a breakdown of the penalty points that had been issued since they had been introduced and reference to an outstanding licensing decision that was awaiting a court date.

In response to a question by Councillor Beuttell, the Licensing Manager informed Members that if a trend was established of a garage not meeting the required vehicle testing standards, the Council would notify the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. After a related question from Councillor Ferguson about the resilience of the current vehicle testing arrangements, the Chair confirmed that he had requested a report to be submitted to a future meeting on this subject.

Following a further question by Councillor Beuttell, it was reported that Uber vehicles were not licensed in Huntingdonshire and, therefore, the Council had no

control over them, but they were licensed by neighbouring authorities. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

21 LICENSING AND PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEE

By means of a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee was acquainted with the outcome of a recent meeting of the Licensing and Protection Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

Chair