
Licensing and Protection Panel

Report of the meeting held on 17th February 2004

Matters for Information

16. STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR LANDFILL PERMIT APPLICATION – WARBOYS LANDFILL SITE

Further to Item No 7 of the Report of the Panel submitted to the Council at its meeting on the 18th February 2004, the Panel has been updated in relation to the application by Fenside Waste Management Ltd for a pollution prevention and control permit for the disposal of hazardous waste at Warboys Landfill Site.

The Panel has been reminded that the provisions of a European Directive has introduced changes in the way in which waste is classified and the operation of landfill sites. In future landfill sites will be restricted to a single category of either hazardous, non-hazardous, or inert waste with co-disposal no longer being permitted. This will involve all existing landfill sites being required to apply to the Environment Agency to convert their current waste management licences into new pollution prevention and control permits.

The Panel has been informed that, to assist in its role as a statutory consultee, the District Council has sought specialist advice from AEA Technology plc who have assessed the application in terms of concern over odour, dust and air quality at the landfill site. The Panel concurred with the comments of both the consultant and the Director of Operational Services that there is insufficient information accompanying the application to assure them that the disposal of hazardous waste at the landfill site will not have a detrimental effect upon the health of local people and the environment. The Panel has therefore authorised the Director of Operational Services to raise their concern with the Environment Agency with regard to the PPC permit application. Following receipt of additional information sought from the applicant, an additional report will be submitted to the Panel for further consideration.

17. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL AIR QUALITY

The Panel has been acquainted with action by the District Council to review and assess local air quality as required by the Environment Act 1995 and the outcome of the consultation processes on the latest updating and screening assessment.

The District Council has a duty to review the air quality in its area and assess whether statutory air quality objectives are being met. In order to fulfil that requirement, the five District Councils in Cambridgeshire and the County Council have worked corporately and have submitted their findings to DEFRA within the required timescale.

As a result the Panel has been informed that it will not be necessary to proceed to the detailed assessment stage of the review as it is likely that the statutory quality objectives will be met. However routine annual progress reports will continue to be undertaken, pending the next detailed assessment being required in 2006.

18. DELEGATED POWERS

The Panel has approved a number of additional delegations to the Director of Operational Services and Head of Environmental Health Services in connection with the application of the European Communities Act 1972. As changes to the importation of food regulations are occurring on a frequent basis which require alterations to the delegated authority to enable Officers to enforce the Regulations, the Panel has also agreed to delegate powers to Officers under any further amendments to the Product of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2003.

**19. OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING –
RESTRICTION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE NUMBERS**

The Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of research undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading which recommends the removal of restrictions that local authorities are currently able to impose on the number of hackney carriage licences issued within each district.

Having regard to a recent unmet demand survey undertaken by the Council which has indicated that there is little unmet demand in the District, the Panel has concluded that it would be inappropriate at the present time to consider removing the current restriction on the number of hackney carriage licences in the District.

**20. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 –
TAXI ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS**

The Panel has been updated on the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which has set technical standards for accessibility to land based public transport. So far, Regulations for access to rail, buses and coaches have been introduced but a recent announcement by the Department of Transport in relation to taxis has concluded that a blanket approach nationwide may cause undue hardship in some areas of the country. The Act will therefore be implemented in two phases, with Huntingdonshire included in the first phase of the application of the Act to taxis when technical regulations on taxi accessibility will be introduced over the period from 2010 to 2020.

21. STUDY ON TAXI STRATEGY AND DEMAND – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Further to Item No. 1 of the Report to the Council meeting held on 24th July 2003, the Panel has been acquainted with the results of the consultation exercise on the taxi strategy and demand which invited comments from taxi proprietors and private hire operators and drivers in the District.

The majority of those who responded supported the issue of three additional hackney carriage licences for specially adapted vehicles for access by disabled. In agreeing the additional licences, the Panel has also decided to restrict one of the existing licences which is currently not issued to an adapted vehicle for the disabled. The licences will be subject to a condition to ensure that they apply only to vehicles suitable for disabled access and would not be transferable. The Licensing and Protection Applications Sub-Group will determine the issue of the licences and will interview applicants in due course.

Arising from the consultation exercise, the Panel will also investigate the creation of additional hackney carriage stands in the vicinity of Sainsburys, and Cineworld in Huntingdon and the Broadway in St Ives and the installation of passenger shelters at hackney carriage ranks under the Council's bus shelter scheme.

The Panel has also agreed to hold annual liaison meetings with representatives of licensing operators, proprietors and drivers and make further investigations into the introduction of taxi sharing schemes and specialist driver training.

22. CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU

The Panel has been informed that following the Government's reduction in its subsidy to the Criminal Records Bureau, the cost of an application for a disclosure will increase from £29 to £33 with effect from 1st April 2004.

The Panel has also been acquainted with a consultation exercise on behalf of the Home Office on the submission of an applicant's fingerprints with disclosure applications as an additional means of checking his/her identity. If a scheme is to be introduced, the Panel have acknowledged that it might be applicable in the case of taxi and private hire drivers who have unsupervised access to children. However the attention of the Home Office has been drawn to the likely cost and time implications involved in the process.

23. GAMBLING BILL

The Panel has been updated with the publication of the draft Gambling Bill which proposes a new approach to the licensing of gambling by way of operating, personal and premises licences. The newly formed Gambling Commission will be responsible for the issuing of operating and personal licences, whilst premises licences would be determined by local authorities.

The draft Bill sets out three licensing objectives which will need to be pursued by both the Gambling Commission and local authorities in the preparation and implementation of a licensing policy after consultation with interest parties. The policy will subsequently be renewed every three years or as necessary.

24. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

The Panel has been informed of the timetable for the review of the Constitution and the likely need for further amendment to the composition of the Panel and Applications Sub-Group once the Licensing Act comes into force.

25. FEES AND CHARGES 2004/5

The Panel has noted that fees for licences administered by the Licensing Section of the Central Services Directorate for 2004/05 will increase by an average of 2.5%.

26. LICENSING AND PROTECTION APPLICATIONS SUB-GROUP

The Panel has noted the Minutes of meetings of the Licensing and Protection Applications Sub-Group at which an application for variation of a public entertainment licence was not granted in respect of the Barley Mow, Main Street, Hartford, two applications were determined for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver's licences from applicants who did not meet the Council's published criteria to hold such a licence; and a variation to a public entertainment licence was granted to "The Priory", Market Square, St Neots until 1.00am on Saturdays for a period of 6 months.

J M Sadler
Chairman