

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 17TH APRIL 2019, AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. L. Dent (Chairman), C. J. Spencer (Vice-Chairman),
M. T. Buxton, M. Glass, S. R. Peters, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey,
L. J. Turner and S. A. Webb

Invitees: Mr. A. Higginson and Mr. P. Cooper, Worcestershire County
Council

Officers: Mrs. V. Brown, Mr. D. Etheridge and Mrs. P. Ross

31/18 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. J. Jones and
C. M. Mc Donald.

32/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

33/18 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 18th March 2019 were
submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 18th
March 2019, be approved as a correct record.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. A. Higginson and Mr. P. Cooper,
Worcestershire County Council to the meeting.

34/18 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE STAND IN MARKET STREET SERVICE ROAD**

The Committee considered a report which detailed a proposal to
relocate the current appointed hackney carriage stand in Market Street
service road.

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), Worcestershire Regulatory Services
(WRS) informed the Committee that, as detailed in the report, officers
had recently been made aware of some upcoming improvements being
made by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for new walking and
cycle routes around Bromsgrove.

The County Council's £3.4 million project aimed to reduce congestion in Bromsgrove by providing alternative travel choices to local residents to reduce short journeys made by car.

The improvements would form part of a wider transport and highways plan for the area and would see an additional six recognised walking and cycling paths being introduced over the next two years. The work would also include improvements to other recognised cycle ways across Bromsgrove.

One aspect of the proposed improvements would impact on the existing hackney carriage stand appointed by Bromsgrove District Council in the Market Street service road (the bus station). It was anticipated that the proposed works at this location would take place in summer 2019.

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), WRS, highlighted that the highway improvements planned at this location would remove two of the five spaces, currently provided for hackney carriages to stand for hire, thus reducing the number of available spaces to three.

Officers had emphasised that this particular hackney carriage stand was already prone to overcrowding in the daytime and that any proposal to reduce the number of existing spaces available for hackney carriage vehicles to stand for hire, would exacerbate the situation.

Members were further informed that following further dialogue with officers from WCC, a proposed solution was put forward. The proposed solution would see the hackney carriage stand being relocated across the road from its current position, thereby retaining all five spaces, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), WRS, explained to the Committee that officers considered that the revised proposal was the best available option for retaining five spaces for hackney carriages to stand for hire at this particular location. There were also some benefits to the proposed relocation, in that hackney carriages would no longer be standing spaced out between entrances to properties that should be kept clear. Also passengers would be able to enter vehicles from the near side without having to walk out into the road.

Members were advised that, in order to implement the proposed location, it would be necessary for the Council to undertake the required legal process to appoint a new hackney carriage stand and revoke the appointment of the existing hackney carriage stand at this location, as detailed in paragraphs 3.16 and 3.17 in the report.

In response to questions from Members, the Senior Practitioner (Licensing), WRS, confirmed that as well as consulting with the chief officer of the police, that licensed taxi drivers would also be consulted with. WCC had already consulted with the bus transport companies.

Members expressed their concerns with regard to potential over-ranking at the proposed new location; as they had witnessed over-ranking at the existing location on many occasions.

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), WRS, explained that over-ranking usually occurred during the daytime. Licensing officers, WRS and civil enforcement officers could deal with over-ranking. If licensing officers witnessed over-ranking they would evidence it and issue points, under the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Penalty Points Scheme, to the offending driver.

He would ensure that it was made very clear to licensed drivers, that there would be serious implications if they were caught over-ranking at the new location and that over-ranking would not be tolerated.

Licensing officers would need to ensure that robust enforcement was carried out and that this message was highlighted to licensed drivers, in order to ensure that there was no potential for over-ranking at the new location.

Members were further reminded that the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Penalty Points Scheme detailed that 'Failure to proceed to another hackney carriage stand on finding a hackney carriage stand full (over-ranking)' was included as a breach and carried penalty points. Members were further reminded that any driver who accumulated 12 points in a two year period would be referred to a Hearing of the Licensing Sub-Committee for a review of whether the individual remained a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

In response to questions from Members, Mr. A. Higginson, WCC, explained that the £3.4 million improvements would be funded through a Department for Transport initiative, to form part of a wider transport and highways plan that would see additional / improved walking and cycling pathways over the next two years. It was also to encourage people to think about how they travelled and the wider health benefits of walking and cycling.

Bromsgrove had a very limited infrastructure to support walking and cycling, forcing some local people to drive short distances. The plan was to make the transport network more efficient, particularly at peak times and to help reduce congestion, by providing new and improved links between the town centre and residential areas. The improvements would see a direct link for pedestrians from Asda to the main town centre shopping area. There would be an upgrade of the existing controlled crossings on Kidderminster Road and Market Street being made into toucan crossings. Widening the paths in some areas would accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. There would be clear signage informing cyclists of when / where they should dismount their bikes and where cycling was prohibited.

WCC had discussed the proposed plans with the bus operators and they were happy with the proposed reduction of bus shelters from 5 to 4.

Members were of the opinion that the taxi rank should be kept by the bus station, it was felt that public transport should be more integrated than it currently was. However, the bus station and taxi rank were easily accessible from the town centre, with buses now available to link to Bromsgrove train station.

RESOLVED

- a) that officers be instructed to conduct a 28 day public consultation process on the proposed relocation of the hackney carriage stand in the Market Street service road; and
- b) that any objections received to the public consultation, be brought back to a meeting of the Licensing Committee for consideration, before a decision was made whether to proceed with the relocation of the hackney carriage stand in the Market Street service road.

The Chairman took the opportunity to express her sincere thanks to Members of the Licensing Committee who were not standing again and to all Members of the Licensing Committee for their valued help and support to her, as Chairman.

The meeting closed at 5.41 p.m.

Chairman