

Attendance

Members of the Licensing Committee

Cllr Alan Bolshaw (Chair)
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Ian Claymore
Cllr Patricia Patten
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr John Rowley (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Daniel Warren
Cllr Hazel Malcolm
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Zee Russell

Employees

Colin Parr – Head of Governance
Elaine Moreton – Section Leader, Licensing
Julia Cleary – Democratic Support

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr Photay.

- 2 **Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.

- 3 **Minutes of previous meetings**
Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

- 4 **Matters arising**
Members received an update in relation to Malones Bar which had now become an African themed community venue.

Members also received an update regarding an applicant for a private hire driver's licence who was appealing against the decision of the Sub-Committee; officers were still awaiting clarification as to whether papers had been lodged in time with the courts.

Officers confirmed that licensing training had been arranged for 7th September 2016 and would be provided by Philip Kolvin QC.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Malcolm to the meeting.

5 **Health & Safety Statutory Plan for 2016/2017**

A report was submitted informing the Licensing Committee of the legal requirement to produce a Health & Safety Statutory Plan and reminding the Committee of the impact of the restructure of Regulatory Services in October and the reduction in resources allocated to the delivery of the Health and Safety service.

The Committee was requested to approve the 2016/17 Health and Safety Statutory Plan which was attached to the report.

Resolved: That the Health & Safety Statutory Plan 2016/17 be approved.

6 **Presentation in Relation to Online Taxi Applications**

The Committee received an update in relation to online taxi applications from the Head of Governance.

It was stated that the number of applications for private hire and hackney carriage driver licences had increased significantly in recent years due to deregulation and drivers moving to Wolverhampton from other neighbouring authorities. The service was expecting to receive in the region of 2000 additional applications before the end of the year.

A presentation was given showing Members the online application process which was hoped to go live in the next week.

Members considered the acceptance of already held DBS forms and some concern was expressed regarding time limits regarding this and whether safeguards had been built into the online application form. Officers confirmed that all DBS forms were checked and where appropriate cross checked rigorously and that a report would be brought to the next meeting regarding the current policy in relation to DBS checking.

The new process would significantly speed up to time taken for a driver's badge to be processed as the documents and information would have already been received and checked prior to the applicant attending the Civic Offices. It was confirmed that further checks would be made of the applicant's driving licence and passport prior to the badge being handed over at the Council Offices.

With regards to the vehicle applications, links were built into the system that would automatically populate the form with data from the DVLA including informing the applicant if the vehicle was too old to be licenced as a taxi. Work was also planned for the future to link the system with VOSA.

Members queried whether due to the reduced administrative costs associated with the online application form a challenge might be received regarding the application fees. Officers agreed that yes this was a possibility and it was suggested that the Council pilot a 10% reduction in fees for online applications.

The Committee were very impressed with the online system and thought it was a very impressive and much smarter way of working.

Resolved:

- a) That a report be brought to the next meeting in relation to DBS checks.
- b) That there be a pilot 10% fee reduction for online applications.
- c) That a follow up paper on the roll out of the online process be brought back to the Committee in 6 months.