

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 1ST DECEMBER 2015 FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2015

EC9: CABINET REPORT – HACKNEY CARRAIGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING CONDITIONS REVIEW

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) presented the Cabinet report and explained that the Council's procedures and conditions required updating following various changes in legislation since the last conditions were approved by Council on 30th June 2011. The guidance on the relevance of convictions had also been reviewed.

The changes to the procedures and conditions went out to consultation with the trade and the consultation document and responses were attached to the Environmental Health Manager's report.

The proposed amendments to the procedures and guidance had been included as an appendix to the Environmental Health Manager's report.

The Chairman thanked the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Squire referred to the change in legislation in that operators could now sub-contract to operators in other areas. She commented that different Local Authority areas would have different conditions and standards and asked if the Council's conditions were more restrictive than neighbouring authorities. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the Council's conditions meant that all licensed vehicles were of a set standard. The conditions meant that the fleet in the Borough was the best it could be. She acknowledged that some neighbouring Authority conditions were not quite as restrictive.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that the effect of allowing operators to sub-contract outside of the Borough was as yet unknown. It would be monitored and any complaints would be investigated in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Housing, Councillor Lawrence felt that the Borough's conditions had ensured that the fleet of vehicles in the Borough were of a high standard and he was proud of the clean smart vehicles which were licensed in the Borough. He explained that the ability for operators to sub-contract outside of the Local Authority area was set out in legislation and therefore was out of the control of the Council. He explained that it would be monitored.

Councillor Mrs Collop referred to part 2.2 of the amended conditions which related to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Right to Work Check. She asked what the cost of this process was. The Environmental Health Manager explained that an enhanced check was carried out which cost in the region of £49. An administration fee was added to this. Amendments to the fees were being considered by full Council at their meeting on 26th November 2015.

The Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space referred to page 53 of the report which related to insurance documents. He asked if the Certificate of Insurance could be displayed in the licensed vehicle so that patrons know that the vehicle was adequately insured. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the driver would not be issued with a licence if they were not appropriately insured and all other necessary checks had been carried out.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet as set out below:

The Council adopt the revised procedures and conditions.

EC10: CABINET REPORT – FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING REPRESENTATION

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the Cabinet report which proposed the establishment of a structured forum involving Freebridge Community Housing and the Council. He explained that the forum has been proposed to include two meetings a year and provide an opportunity to ensure that respective priorities are understood; that new opportunities are explored; and that challenges and risks are identified.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that meetings were held between the Council and Freebridge Community Housing and the report sought to formalise the arrangements. Terms of Reference had been proposed by Freebridge Community Housing and were attached to the report.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Housing Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Smith referred to the membership of the Strategic Forum and asked if Councillors would be provided the opportunity to attend these meetings to raise any issues. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community, Councillor Lawrence explained that there were other methods for dealing with individual constituent issues without taking them to the strategic level. He explained that the purpose of the Strategic Forum would be to ensure that the Council and Freebridge Community Housing continued to work together and progress in the future.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that if Councillors had strategic issues to raise, they could do so via the relevant Councillor or officer who could, if appropriate, raise the issue at the Strategic Forum meeting. He explained that the operational meeting would be undertaken in a more structured way. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community, Councillor Lawrence reminded those present that Freebridge did have a Tenants Panel and tenant representatives on the Board.

In response to a further question from Councillor Smith, the Strategic Housing Manager agreed to clarify if minutes from the Strategic Forum meetings would be available to Members of the Council.

Councillor Hipperson asked if the establishment of the Strategic Forum would impact on those Councillors who had been appointed to the Freebridge Community Housing Board. The Chairman explained that it should not have any impact. The Strategic Forum was an additional meeting. The Panel was reminded that regular meetings between the Council and Freebridge already took place, but no formal arrangements were in place.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He sought clarification if the Agendas and Minutes of the Strategic Forum would be a public record and the Strategic Housing Manager agreed to clarify. Councillor Moriarty also sought assurance that the creation of the Strategic Forum would not dilute the influence of the Council representatives on Freebridge Community Housing Board. The Strategic Housing Manager explained that the Strategic Forum would not be a decision making body and that this proposal did not present any changes to the Board's Constitution. The Strategic Forum would be a mechanism for sharing information and updating each other on progress and current issues.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge commented that the Strategic Forum would be a good way of communicating between organisations and keeping each other up to date. She explained that when she was on Freebridge Community Housing Board she provided updates to Members as appropriate on work of the Board and it would be valuable to the Panel if current Board Members were to do the same.

In response to a question from Councillor Westrop, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that discussions would be help on the operation of the Strategic Forum and operational structures would be put in place. If required an action plan could be produced and current mechanisms could be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

- (i) To agree the proposed terms of reference to a strategic forum between the Council and Freebridge Community Housing as set out in the report.
- (ii) To agree that the Leader and the Portfolio older with responsibility for Housing, along with the Chief Executive, represent the Council at the proposed forum.