

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held on 27 June 2025 at 11.30 am

**Present
Councillors:**

J Buczkowski, J Cairney, D Broom,
F J Colthorpe, J M Downes, G Duchesne,
S Keable and L G J Kennedy

**Apologies
Councillors:**

L J Cruwys, M Jenkins and J Lock

**Also Present
Councillor:**

Cllr G Czapiewski

**Also Present
Officers:**

Deborah Sharpley (Legal Services Manager), Harriet Said (Team Leader (Commercial), Public Health), Thomas Keating (Specialist Lead (Licensing) Officer) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR (00:03:10)

The Chair of the Council invited nominations for the election of a Chair for the municipal year 2025/2026.

RESOLVED that Cllr J Cairney be elected as Chair of the Regulatory Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR (00:04:39)

The Chair of the Regulatory Committee invited nominations for the election of a Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2025/2026

RESOLVED that Cllr A Cuddy be elected as Vice Chair of the Regulatory Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

3 START TIME OF MEETINGS (00:06:02)

It was **AGREED** that the start time of meetings for the remainder of the municipal year continued to be at 11.30am.

4 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00:07:32)**

Apologies were received from Cllr L Cruwys, Cllr M Jenkins and Cllr J Lock.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00:07:53)**

There were no declarations of interest received.

6 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00:08:10)**

There were no members of the public present and no questions were asked.

7 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (00:08:17)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2 October 2024 were agreed as a true record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

8 **REGULATORY UPDATE REPORT (00:08:45)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Team Leader, (Commercial), Public Health of the Regulatory Update Report.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- There had been a significant decrease in the number of Licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles across the district. No particular reason had been identified as to why that was the case
- A total of 27 taxi inspections had taken place between January and March 2025. This was lower than previous years mainly due to delaying inspections until the revised Taxi Policy had come into effect on 1 January 2025 as well as staffing pressures.
- There were a total of 48 animal related licences which included cat and dog boarding, day care, dog breeding and hiring out horses.
- Currently this work was undertaken by an external contractor as a specific qualification was required under the current legislation to carry out those visits. However 2 members of the Licensing Team were undertaking that qualification.
- There was a joint Environmental Health and UK Health Security Agency initiative which looked at a type of micro-organism, Pseudomonas Aeruginosa, which was a common bacteria found in the environment. It existed harmlessly on the surface of the skin but once the skin was broken it could cause serious infections of the skin, soft tissue and bloodstreams. Symptoms included respiratory and urinary infections and was difficult to treat.
- There had not been any outbreaks in Mid Devon however 19 samples had been taken from 3 different premises. The organism was found in one of the premises and after following officer advice and guidance on cleaning practices, following resampling, the results had returned satisfactorily.

- An agency member of staff had joined the Licensing Team this week who was helping with the workload whilst the team considered a new structure to deliver the core functions.
- There had been a total of 3 Regulatory Sub-Committee Hearings which had taken place in 2024/2025.
- Training had been provided to license holders specifically looking at Safeguarding and Disability Awareness to comply with the new Taxi Policy requirements with training having to be undertaken every 3 years. A total of 99 licence holders had attended to date.
- A minor change had been made to the Taxi Policy under delegated authority from the Head of Housing and Health, as the Policy had limited the ability to license a third row of seats in the back of a vehicle. As this would have had a significant impact on public transport across the district this had now been changed.
- A number of vehicles did not meet the exact dimensions that the Policy had specified for the size of the cab. This had been adjusted to remove the defined sizing requirements from the Policy itself and use more of a subjective assessment of space and comfort. The dimensions would sit outside of the Policy and would be referred to in the event of complaints for concerns about a vehicle.
- A review of the taxi tariff had been requested. A piece of work would be initiated to establish if the wider trade wished for a review.
- A project was planned to take place during 2025/2026 to review the licensing approach to residential caravan sites. This would be a joint piece of work between Licensing and Environmental Health.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- Whether the Council had any zoo licences or licences that were exempt. It was explained that the Council did not have either.
- The taxi rank in Tiverton being used by members of the public. It was explained that this was a matter for Devon County Council Highways to resolve.
- The amount of dog litters to be classed as a dog breeder. It was explained that detailed guidelines were outlined by the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Note: * Report previously circulated.

9 REVIEW OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING POLICY (00:44:13)

The Committee had before it a report * from the Specialist Lead (Licensing) Officer for the review of the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- The Animal Welfare Regulations 2018 were published which changed the way animal related businesses were inspected and licensed. This included pet shops, dog and cat boarding and dog breeders.
- The Regulations did not affect dangerous wild animals and zoo licensing.
- In 2020 the Council went through a process of consulting on and adopting a new Animal Welfare Licensing Policy.
- A 6 week consultation period was proposed as well as a number of minor changes to the Policy which complied with DEFRA guidance which would then be adopted later this year.
- The Animal Welfare (Primate License) Regulations came into force from April 2025 which specifically related to private keepers in setting the same standards you would expect in a zoo. There were currently no private keepers in Mid Devon.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The granting of an application or renewal guidelines. It was explained that it was the responsibility of the Licensee to apply in good time although reminders were issued prior to the expiry date despite it not been a statutory requirement to do so.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Regulatory Committee approve the draft Animal Welfare Licensing Policy attached as Annexe A for a 6 week public consultation.

(Proposed by Cllr A Cuddy and seconded by Cllr J Buczkowski)

Note: * Report previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 12.25 pm)

CHAIR