

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held on 5 December 2025 at 11.30 am

Present

Councillors

J Cairney (Chair)
A Cuddy (Vice-Chair), F J Colthorpe,
J M Downes, G Duchesne and
L G J Kennedy

Apologies

Councillors

J Buczkowski, D Broom, L J Cruwys, M Jenkins and
S Keable

Also Present

Officers

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

10 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00:03:11)

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Broom, J Buczkowski, L Cruwys, M Jenkins and S Keable.

The Clerk confirmed that despite the apologies, as six Members of the Committee were present the meeting was quorate.

11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00:03:34)

There were no public questions.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00:03:44)

There were no declarations of interest.

13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00:03:55)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27 June 2025 were agreed as a true record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

14 REVIEW OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING POLICY (00:04:15)

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

The following was highlighted within the report:

- The Animal Welfare Act 2006 introduced new power enabling national regulations to be made known as the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 were published.
- This had had a big impact on the Licensing Team and how the licensing scheme for animal businesses was administered.
- It affected pet shops, dog and cat boarding sites and riding establishments.
- Dangerous Animals and Zoo Licensing had their own distinct pieces of legislation.
- Although it was not a statutory requirement to have an Animal Welfare Licensing Policy, it was felt that it would help to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and would assist stakeholders, officers and Members to have a policy to refer to and ensure consistency. Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) adopted a policy in 2020.
- A six week consultation had been carried out following approval at the previous meeting held on 27 June 2025.
- The proposed amendments were highlighted within the officer's report.
- The Licensing Team had consulted with various bodies including licence holders, Environmental Health, Planning, Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Devon and Cornwall Police and Trading Standards. A Notice had also been displayed on the Council's website to ensure that members of the public were also aware of the consultation.
- Only one response had been received during the consultation period.
- There were no recommendations to amend the policy that had been initially consulted on.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The prevention of animals as prizes on land owned or controlled by MDDC. It was explained that a previous discussion and agreement had taken place regarding this.
- Licenced applicants with previous convictions and whether there was a process in place to deal with that. It was explained that a potential option would be for the Licensing Team to refer the decision to a Regulatory Sub-Committee. Each application would be assessed on its own merits.
- The rules and regulations regarding dog breeding. It was explained that if breeding was being run as a business, a licence would be necessary regardless of the number of litters. If it did not run as a business, then a licence would be required for three litters or more in the space of a 12 month period.
- Whether snakes were classed as a dangerous animal. It was explained that it would depend upon the species of snake and whether or not they were on the statutory list.

With reference to the prevention of using animals as prizes on land controlled by MDDC the Committee took a vote as to whether this should be included within the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy and for delegated authority to be given to the Licensing Officer to use the same wording that was approved on Motion 597 that was presented at a previous Council meeting.

Upon a vote being taken this was **CARRIED**.
(Cllr F J Colthorpe voted against the proposal)

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Council adopt the final draft of the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annex A and B respectively and to include the wording previously approved at a previous Council meeting to prevent using animals as prizes on land controlled by MDDC.

(Proposed by Cllr J Downes and seconded by Cllr G DuChesne)

Notes:

- (i) * Report previously circulated.
- (ii) [Full Council- Motion 597](#)

15 INTRODUCTION OF A CARAVAN SITE AND MOBILE HOMES LICENSING POLICY (00:30:26)

The Committee had before it a report * from the (Team Leader (Commercial), Public Health) for the introduction of a Caravan Site and Mobile Homes Licensing Policy.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- A new Caravan Site and Mobile Homes Licensing Policy was being proposed with a three-month public consultation.
- The Council had a responsibility for licensing caravan sites which included holiday sites as well as those that were for permanent residents.
- The legislation defined residential sites as protected sites which meant it could be occupied by individuals as a primary residence for 12 months of the year.
- The legislation was complex, and the Council did not have an overriding policy or framework to follow.
- The new policy would bring existing policies into a single policy with an updated fee structure. It would introduce wider changes to the licensing and oversight of caravan sites within MDDC to ensure compliance with licensing conditions.
- The changes would also introduce a range of standard conditions for different types of sites and an inspection risk assessment tool which would reduce complaints and reactive work.
- The policy would provide a more comprehensive and coherent approach to fully implementing the relevant powers and formalised the inspection regime for all caravan sites in MDDC.
- It would introduce a broader fee structure to ensure effective cost recovery; the fee would only apply to relevant protected sites.

- The new fee structure and proactive risk-based inspection approach would more accurately encompass the current Licensing Team's resources, and it would ensure working with other teams across the Authority.
- There was a total of 49 caravan sites across the district that were licenced with 37% of those sites being relevant protected sites.
- A data project was underway with involvement from Licensing, Private Sector Housing and Planning to ensure that the piece of work was fully understood.
- A three-month consultation beginning on 15 December 2025 was proposed to help shape the policy ensuring it would be fit for purpose and appropriate.
- Face-to-face sessions would be held during the three-month consultation period with licence holders to take their direct views. Members of the Regulatory Committee would be welcome to help support the event.
- There would be an introduction of cost recovery should enforcement action be required if a site did not comply with the legislation.
- To ensure compliance site inspections would be carried out by a Licensing officer or an officer of the Commercial Team or Private Sector Housing officer, depending on the nature of the site. In order to be consistent with assessing sites a risk assessment tool was proposed which would define premises and would be assessed against three criteria which would include:-
 - (a) The number of residential pitches
 - (b) A history of compliance for the site
 - (c) Confidence in management of the site operator.
- The final policy would consolidate the existing policies into one single document which included the Mobile Homes Fit and Proper Person Setting Fee Policy and the Mobile Homes Fit and Property Person Determination Policy.
- At the time that the new policy came into effect, the proposal would be that the existing policies would come to an end.
- The results of the consultation and proposed changes would be brought back to the Regulatory Committee in 2026.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The importance for Members of the Committee to attend face-to-face sessions with licence holders. It was confirmed that an email would be sent to all Members of the Regulatory Committee once a date had been confirmed.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Regulatory Committee approve the draft Caravan Site and Mobile Homes Policy and associated Annexes (attached in Annexes A-H) for a three-month public consultation.

(Proposed by the Chair)

Note: * Report previously circulated.

16 LICENSING UPDATE REPORT (00:56:39)

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:

- The report gave an overview of the activity undertaken during the first half of 2025/2026.
- The contextual data contained within the report also included a number of charts as requested at the previous Committee meeting.
- A total of 32 taxi inspections had been carried out in the first half of the year. This was a significant increase on the year before for the same period due to proactive checks of vehicles following the introduction of the new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy and the new requirements.
- A total of 91 drivers attended the Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training.
- A consultation had taken place to consider whether the taxi trade wished for a review of the Hackney Carriage tariff. A total of 23 licenced proprietors were consulted with and a total of six responses had been received. All of which confirmed they would like an increase in the tariff. Due to the poor response further work would be carried out to establish how to take it forward.
- A tariff increase would be proposed which would be taken to Cabinet and the Regulatory Committee would be informed of any changes at the next meeting.
- There was a total of 52 animal related licences currently active across the District.
- Dog breeding, home boarding and dog day care had showed the largest increase.
- There had been an increase in complaints received relating to animal welfare premises, both licenced and unlicenced. A total of eight complaints had been received, three of which were related to premises that were licenced.
- The complaints predominately related to the alleged unlicenced breeding and the sale of pets.
- Resources were available to recruit a part time Animal Welfare Officer and a full time Regulatory Officer.
- Currently this work was undertaken by an external contractor as a specific qualification was required under the current legislation to carry out those visits. Going forward, this work would be carried out in-house as following interviews the role has been offered to someone who had a huge amount of experience and had worked for the RSPCA for many years.
- There had been one Regulatory Sub-Committee which related to a Hackney Carriage Operator. The outcome of the Hearing was that the Operator would be monitored for a period of three months to ensure they complied with the licensing conditions.
- A budget announcement introduced the 3p per mile or 1.5p per mile charge for electric vehicles and for plug in hybrid vehicles from 2028. The Licensing Team had received a representation from a licence holder, indicating that they believed that this charge would have an impact on the taxi trade particularly in view of the new Hackney Carriage and Prive Hire Policy which had a commitment to move towards zero emissions by 2030 in line with central Government.

- A piece of work would be undertaken to see whether or not there was likely to be a direct impact on compliance when all vehicles would need to comply with zero emissions in 2030.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The Licensing Authority had a licence for a dangerous animal – what animal was this? It was confirmed that it was for a camel.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 12.40 pm)

CHAIR