

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held on 15 October 2015 at 10.15 am

Present

Councillors

D R Coren (Chairman)
Mrs E M Andrews, R J Chesterton, Mrs F J Colthorpe,
T G Hughes, P H D Hare-Scott, K Busch, Mrs G Doe,
J M Downes, C J Eginton, Mrs B M Hull and J L Smith

Apologies

Councillors

N V Davey, D J Knowles and L D Taylor

Present

Officers

Simon Newcombe (Public Health and Professional Services Manager), Simon Johnson (Legal Services Manager), Thomas Keating (Lead Licensing Officer), Jacqueline Taylor (Licensing Officer) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

8 Apologies and Substitute Members

Apologies were received from Councillors N V Davey, D J Knowles and L D Taylor.

9 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

10 Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 September 2015 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

11 Fees report 2015 - Animal related

Prior to consideration of this item the Public Health and Professional Services Manager invited the Licensing Officer to briefly update the Committee on a recent enforcement action. Under delegated powers the licensing authority had recently revoked the licence of a private hire taxi driver. The driver had since applied for a new licence and the determination of this would be considered at a forthcoming Licensing Hearing. It was **AGREED** that a standing item be placed on future Licensing and Regulatory Committee agenda's entitled 'Enforcement update' so that Members of the Committee are kept up to date.

The Committee had before it a report * from the Head of Human Resources and Development recommending the adoption of licence fees as set out in the report.

The Public Health and Professional Services Manager outlined the contents of the report stating that the Committee had previously agreed the methodology for calculating taxi charges. The same costing method had been applied to animal related fees in trying to cost out the financial impact upon the authority. It was stated that the service had been running at a slight deficit. The spreadsheet used to calculate the various costs involved was shown to the Committee including administration costs which underpinned all application processes. The point was made that the service could not continue to run at a loss and that a fair system of charges, accurately recording the costs involved, needed to be in place. Officers were confident that the spreadsheet shown to the Committee during discussion would effectively do this. Previously there are not been a robust enough system for doing this. The new matrix had demonstrated that the service had previously been under charging, this was not sustainable going forwards.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Costs were shown against certain application types even though there were no premises within that category. It was explained that even though applications may not have been received, for example, to have a new zoo, a regime still needed to be in place in the event that an application was received. Costs relating to ongoing procedural work still needed to be recovered.
- Each element of the new matrix could be examined at a future meeting and a more in depth analysis could be provided to the Committee.
- Time recording had improved.
- A review was needed on the level of fees and the processes involved in calculating them on an annual basis.
- Whether or not it was a good idea to have a contingency built into the budget to allow for unexpected costs or to draw down from reserves?

RESOLVED that the fees reflecting the true projected cost of the function be implemented in full immediately and that an annual review of the process also takes place.

(Proposed by Cllr J M Downes and seconded by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott)

Note : * Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes.

(The meeting ended at 11.04 am)

CHAIRMAN