

ADULT AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD 27 February 2012

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Hilary Thompson, Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder

Officers: Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Ian Harrison, Principal Trading Standards and Licensing Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

24. Revision of 2012/2013 Fees and Charges – Cemeteries and Crematorium *(Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services))*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To consider the annual review of fees and charges in respect of services provided by the Parks and Countryside section's Cemeteries and Crematorium Team.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided information regarding the Parks and Countryside section's Cemeteries and Crematorium services and recommended fees and charges for 2012/13. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the proposed amended fees would bring Hartlepool in line with neighbouring local authorities.

The Portfolio Holder noted with regret the need to increase the burial fees to ensure sufficient income to service the loan for the delivery and commissioning of the new equipment.

Decision

The charges contained within Appendix A of the report were approved for implementation as from 1 April 2012.

25. Street Trading (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To propose amendments to the current system of charging for street trading licences and consents in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report outlined the current process for the consideration, approval and charging for street trading in Hartlepool and proposes changes designed to both increase business opportunity and Council revenue.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to note that for the first year of trading, the fee was £450 should the trading be undertaken in a bona fide new location. In response to a question, the Public Protection Manager confirmed that currently, rebates for the early surrender of street trading licences and consents were given based on how many months the licence had been in operation on a percentage basis. However, the proposal to withdraw any rebates would bring the local authority in line with neighbouring authorities who do not provide any rebates.

A discussion ensued on the definition of charitable trading and it was noted that there would be discretion in place to allow the Public Protection Manager to consider whether a fee should be charged for such situations and a list of the issues that would be taken into account were noted in the report.

Decision

- (i) The new fee structure for street trading licensing as detailed in Appendix 2 was approved.
- (ii) The withdrawal of the provision of rebates for the early surrender of street trading licences and consents unless, in the opinion of the Public Protection Manager, the surrender of the consent was due to action taken that was beyond the consent holder's control was

- approved. Rebates would not be available where a private land owner had withdrawn permission to trade.
- (iii) The withdrawal of fee exemptions for charitable trading for longer than two days at any one time was approved and that, for trading of less than two days, the Public Protection Manager be granted discretion to waive the consent fee where appropriate taking into account the issues detailed in the report.

26. Sale of Solvents to Children (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of a recent test purchase exercise relating to the sale of solvents to children.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report highlighted the dangers of solvent and volatile substance abuse and outlined the results of a Trading Standards test purchase exercise that highlights the easy availability of these products such as glues and aerosols to children. It was highlighted that current legislation was poor in relation to enforcement powers with regard to selling solvents and volatile substances. It was noted that whilst there was no desire to prohibit the purchase of all solvents and volatile substances, research had suggested that the abuse of such substances quite often kills on the first use. The importance of raising awareness and educating children, parents and the retailers who supply the products was emphasised.

The Portfolio Holder reiterated the need to raise awareness of the dangers of these substances, possibly through the involvement of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the Health and Well Being Board. In addition, notices highlighting the dangers should be displayed in all Council owned premises and supermarkets could be approached to display posters. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services indicated that the Council had worked in partnership with the Hartlepool College of Further Education to utilise College students' skills through an art competition, to create poster campaigns.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.

- (ii) The Trading Standards Service was supported in its continued efforts to improve trader awareness of the risks associated with the supply of solvents and volatile substances to children.

27. Joint Operation on Counterfeit Alcohol (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of a joint operation carried out by Hartlepool Borough Council's Public Protection Officers and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as part of an initiative to tackle counterfeit alcohol.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided information about a successful joint operation which was carried out during December 2011 to identify if there was any counterfeit alcohol on sale in the town. The report highlighted that pleasingly, no counterfeit alcohol was found in any of the outlets visited. However, it was recognised that the Council cannot afford to be complacent and traders and the public were encouraged to report any approaches from individuals trying to sell them alcohol at low prices.

The Portfolio Holder sought clarification on how, in the current climate of cut backs, would the resources be made available to continue with this monitoring. The Public Protection Manager confirmed that through the Trading Standards and Environmental Health officers working together and utilising the different powers available to them it was manageable.

Decision

The report was noted.

28. Progress Report in respect of Changes to the Council's Food Hygiene Award Scheme (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non key

Purpose of report

To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update on the Council's progress in relation to the migration from the 'Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award Scheme' to new national 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS).

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report summarised the progress made on the 'start up' and 'pre launch' activities for the migration from the 'Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award Scheme' to the new national 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS).

The report briefly detailed recent developments concerning the FHRS. It also set out the work which must be completed prior to the Council's launch of the scheme on 1 April 2012. The Public Protection Manager informed the Portfolio Holder that all businesses had been informed of the implications of the scheme and whether they would be exempt. It was noted that businesses that were exempt from the scheme, such as manufacturers had been informed that they could opt to remain involved with the scheme and achieve a rating if they so wished. In addition, two events had been organised for early March 2012 to raise awareness and provide support for traders and would be held in Hartlepool College of Further Education.

The Portfolio Holder was informed that the Public Protection Team was working closely with the Economic Development Team to work with and support local businesses in the transition to the new scheme with packs being made available in several languages. The Portfolio Holder was pleased to note the level of support being provided to local businesses.

Decision

The progress report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 2.45 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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