

LICENSING COMMITTEE

15 December 2023 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillors Blanchard-Cooper (Chair), Haywood (Vice-Chair), Goodheart, McAuliffe, McDougall and Worne

481. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Batley, Bence, Cooper, Madeley and Patel.

482. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to an error that had resulted in the incorrect start time for this meeting being published on the Council's Website and Agenda. The start time stated 9.30am instead of the 10.00am start time agreed by this Committee at its meeting on 23 June 2023.

To deal with this situation he referred members to Part 5 Rules of Procedure (Meetings) Section 2 – Committee Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution. Rule 13.11 – Motions which may be moved during debate, allow for a motion to be moved to adjourn a meeting.

The Chair moved to adjourn the meeting for a period of 30 minutes until the agreed start time of 10.00am. The adjournment of the meeting until 10.00am was proposed by Councillor McDougall and seconded by Councillor Hayward.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To adjourn the start time of the Licensing Committee for a period of 30 minutes until 10.00am.

483. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

484. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2023 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair. The Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 23 June 2023, 10 July 2023, 14 August 2023 and 15 September 2023 were noted by the Committee.

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485. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There were no urgent items.

486. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

487. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Group Head of Technical Services invited the Committee to make comment on the report.

The Committee noted the report.

488. TAXI POLICY AND BYELAWS

The Chair thanked the Environmental Health Team for all the work that had gone into producing the Taxi Policy and Byelaws report.

The Environmental Health Team Manager was then invited by the Chair to present the report. The report sought adoption of a revised Hackney Carriage/Private Licensing Policy following the approval of the Committee, at its meeting on 9 September 2022, to carry out a six-week public consultation period. The proposals included the Introduction of a vehicle age limit, emissions standards, requirements for CCTV and other minor amendments and updates. He referred to the resolution also made by the Committee that the byelaws should be updated with minor amendments and advertised. However, most of the minor changes to the byelaws have been incorporated into the draft policy and can be implemented as part of the licensing conditions instead of a byelaw. The public consultation had taken place during September and October 2022 and had specifically been brought to the attention of the taxi trade.

Details of the responses were provided at appendix 3 of the report. Of the 122 responses, 78 stated they were not in support of mandatory CCTV. Following the responses received, whilst there were significant public safety and crime prevention benefits, given the concerns raised it was not proposed to proceed with its introduction at this stage. Instead officers will carry out further consultation and research, with greater engagement with residents to ensure a balanced view. A further report will then be brought to the Committee with the findings and a draft CCTV policy if it is proposed to proceed. Concerns were also raised about the proposed vehicle emission and age criteria and following the concerns raised, the proposals had been amended. The changes, set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report, related to the maximum age limit for

licensed a vehicle and the requirement for vehicles to be Ultra Low Emission Vehicle emission from 1 April 2030.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Worne and seconded by Councillor Goodheart.

The Chair invited members to make comment or ask questions

During the discussion members were understanding of some of the concerns expressed by the taxi trade in relation to the proposed introduction of CCTV, which may be expensive to implement. However, it was important that measures were in place to protect both drivers and members of public. The Committee expressed their support for further public consultation to be carried out to get a balanced view. A member asked about restrictions on vehicle engine size and if officers had given consideration to that and also about encouraging a greater take up of electric or hybrid vehicles? The Environmental Health Team Manager responded that engines sizes had not specifically been looked into, but the ultra-low emission requirements would likely impact the maximum engine size. Officers undertook to include fee incentives for electric and hybrid vehicles, which would be included in the Fee Setting report to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 23 February 2024. A member referred to Appendix 9 – Conditions applicable to all wheelchair accessible vehicles and asked how many wheelchair accessible vehicles were licensed in the District and how often lift inspections were required to be carried out. The Environmental Health Team Manager undertook to provide details of the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed in the District outside of the meeting. Under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations, similar to an MOT, lifts relating to lifting people required thorough examination twice a year. The Environmental Health Team Manager responded to a question from a member concerning Arun's promotion as a tourist destination and whether licensed drivers could be encouraged to become ambassadors for Arun. The Policy did not specifically look into tourism, it was chiefly about public safety, and advised that its inclusion would need to be assessed for reasonableness.

The Chair referred to the lead in times for consideration of the Policy by the Committee, following concerns raised by the taxi trade. He had spoken to the officers and had taken into account following discussion that a lot of work has gone into the Policy and confirmed that officers have carefully considered their concerns.

The Licensing Committee

RESOLVED to agree:

1. That the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Handbook 2023 ('Draft Policy') be adopted, to come into effect from 1 April 2024
2. That Authority be given to the Group Head Technical Services in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing Committee to make minor and administrative amendments to the Policy.

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3. That the Licensing Team continue to explore the proposals for the introduction of CCTV within taxi vehicles and carry out further research and consultation, with a further report to committee on any proposal, accompanied by a draft CCTV policy.

489. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 10.25 am)