

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 6.00 pm in Remote Meeting

Present: Councillors A R H England, M B Hosken, J E Lavery, H Rhodes (Chair), K S Sahota, J M Seymour (as substitute for R T Kiernan), B J Thompson and C R Turley (Vice-Chair)

In Attendance: Councillor R Overton, D Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), A Hunt (Public Protection Manager), S Fisher (Principal Licensing Officer), C Girvan (Legal Advisor), P Mitchell (Democracy Officer) and J Clarke (Democracy Officer)

Apologies: Councillor S J Reynolds

LIC1 Declarations of Interest

None.

LIC2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 27 October 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LIC3 Review of the Terms of Reference

The Legal Advisor gave Members a brief overview of the review of the Terms of Reference of the Licensing Committee and the wide ranging work remit. At Full Council on 21 May 2020, it was delegated that the Committee agreed its term of reference annually. There were no changes to the current Terms of Reference.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED – that the Terms of Reference for the Licensing Committee be agreed.

LIC4 Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Standards policies and conditions

Councillor R Overton addressed Members with regard to the work being undertaken to ensure the safety of residents when using taxis which included cross border hiring. Although there were no changes regarding cross border hiring at the present time, the Department of Transport had introduced new statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards in order to safeguard children

and vulnerable adults and which also had positive consequences and benefits for all passengers. There were a total of 31 key areas to improve and 20 of these had been implemented into the policy document with the remaining areas all being addressed including the draft policy which was before committee. Key changes for License holders were with regards to arrest and release, charge and conviction of offences, DBS changes and the installation of CCTV within vehicles. A four week consultation had taken place with regard to CCTV in early 2021 with all relevant external bodies and it had been published on the Council's website.

The Public Protection Manager gave an overview of the key issues following the introduction of new statutory standards from the Department of Transport that published in July 2020. The revised policies introduced best practice standards and 20 of the 31 key areas had already been introduced and the Council had taken this opportunity to review its CCTV policy and the driver vehicle and operation conditions. The policy document had now become a single document separated into sections for ease of reference. The policy document was appended to the report with the Council's changes being marked in red with additional changes following consultation being highlighted in purple. Some typographical errors and broken hyperlinks had been identified and these would be corrected prior to publication. Although the CCTV scheme was voluntary, it was recommended that the Council remained the data controller for the CCTV as the Council was already registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and had a set of common standards in place to ensure security of data. It also offered an impartial oversight and reduce the burden on the drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors. If Members were minded to approve the policy it would come into effect on 1 April 2021.

During the debate some Members asked for clarification on the costs of having CCTV installed, if drivers were consulted and if they would be expected to pay for the cost of the CCTV. Other Members considered that CCTV was an excellent way to protect the public, women, children and vulnerable adults and also considered it was security for the driver of the vehicle but would raise concerns if drivers/operators wished to be the controllers.

The Public Protection Manager explained that the CCTV policy was a voluntary scheme but drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors who installed CCTV must let the Council know and that they would need to comply with policy and procedures. The cost of the unit would be borne by the driver/proprietor and any system purchased must comply with minimum standards.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED – that the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be approved.

The meeting ended at 6.17 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: Tuesday, 29 June 2021