

MINUTES of a meeting of the LICENSING COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor N Smith (in the Chair)

Councillors E G C Allman, T Eynon, M French, M D Hay, G Hout, J Hout, K Merrie MBE and S Sheahan

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr L Mansfield, Mr A Cooper, Mrs L Arnold and Mrs M Long

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Clarke, T Saffell, D Stevenson and M Wyatt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2018.

It was moved by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Allman and

RESOLVED THAT: The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

4. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE POLICY AND CONDITIONS

Members considered a report presented by Mr L Mansfield, Environmental Health Team Manager on the review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy and conditions.

In reviewing the current vehicle conditions account has been taken of the current edition of the Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guide issued in 2010 and the Department for Transport Statutory Guidance for Licensing Authorities; Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Protecting Users issued in February 2019.

Mr Mansfield took the Committee through each of the objectives and subsequently each of the proposed amendments in turn, inviting questions either through the meeting, after the meeting or during the 3 month consultation process which would follow.

The Chairman invited questions and comments.

Councillor N Smith recalled the days when taxis were not of the high standard which they are now and welcomed the efforts which are continuously being made by officers in striving to improve. He asked whether the current situation with regards to the European Union would affect the implementation of Euro 5 engines to which he was advised there would be no impact.

Councillor Merrie and Councillor Eynon sought clarification on the references to Euro 5 engines and specifically the implications on those people who currently did not comply;

Chairman's initials

and also how this would be communicated to ensure that those affected would be given sufficient notice to do so. It was confirmed that there were only 15 such affected vehicles and there would be a wide consultation process with all operators and known individuals; all enquiries would come through the officers whereby the information would be provided and the details would also be publicised on the council's website.

It was agreed that for the purposes of clarity, and to avoid any confusion, reference to the engines would include the date of the registration of the vehicle.

Turning to the issue of CCTV and in response to a question by Councillor J Hoult, it was confirmed that the intent behind the policy was to ensure the appropriate management of recorded data.

Councillor Eynon was concerned that, whilst the policy quite rightly addressed concerns around the use of CCTV data, the restrictions might deter taxi drivers from using CCTV and asked whether there were any companies that could help install it and, if not, asked if this was something that the Council could offer.

It was confirmed that there are currently companies that specialise in this and the Council would not choose to make CCTV a mandatory requirement as that would make NWLDC data controllers. Councillor Eynon asked whether the Council might at least try and broker a deal with such companies to assist the drivers with the financial burden of installing CCTV.

Councillor Merrie suggested the introduction of an aide memoir for drivers to help them comply with the conditions of having CCTV should they wish to install it for their own personal safety.

The Chairman offered to invite a company to do a presentation at a future meeting of the Committee setting out what it could offer, however, members felt that those who would benefit most from this are the drivers and not the members of the Committee. The Chairman suggested that such a presentation could be made at a future meeting of the Taxi Forum and this was agreed.

Councillor Hay asked whether neighbouring Authorities where their drivers were working in this district were also improving their standards, to which he was advised that each Authority adopts its own standards and North West Leicestershire is at the top of its game in this regard. Unfortunately as the law stands, we have no powers to inspect such vehicles but, that said, we are looking at cross border authorisation between ourselves, South Derbyshire and East Staffordshire.

A lengthy discussion ensued involving all members on the merits or otherwise of having a first aid kit in the vehicle and if so, determining what constitutes a 'suitable' kit, given that this is subjective. The question was also asked about first aid training and whether this ought to be a requirement. After a lengthy debate it was agreed that advice would be sought from paramedics as to what they considered would be suitable. Once this advice has been sought, officers will email the Chair with the suggested revised wording to the policy before the next meeting when the policy when will considered for approval.

The Chairman thanked all members for their attendance and asked that, in accordance with the recommendations, any further comments be conveyed to officers for consideration before the next meeting.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.25 pm

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