

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

General Licensing Committee

HELD ON THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2021 AT 6.00 PM

HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING.

Present:

Councillors Victoria Haval (Chair), Kellie Hinton (Vice-Chair), Peter Dragonetti, Elizabeth Gillespie, Lorraine Hillier, Axel MacDonald, Leigh Rawlins, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, and Alan Thompson

Officers:

Sarah Commins, Laura Driscoll, Michael Flowers, Diane Foster, and Susie Royce

8 Apologies for absence

Councillor Jo Robb tendered apologies.

9 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th December 2020 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

10 Declarations of interest

None.

11 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

Members were informed that the Taxi Licensing Panel proposed meeting dates would be circulated the following week and would cover the period from the middle of February to the end of March. Members were asked to respond with their availability as soon as they were able to.

12 Public participation

None.

13 Review of Joint Taxi Licensing Policy

The Licensing Team Leader introduced the report. Members were informed that the existing policy had been published in 2013 and had only received minor amendments since that date. The proposed new Joint Taxi Policy subsequently was the first full review in eight years and included changes to reflect new legislation, although it was noted that the licensing authority was already complying with the legislative requirements as their working practises had already been amended. The officer also clarified that the Department for Transport expected local authorities to implement its new standards which were published in July 2020 unless there was a compelling reason to depart from the standards.

The officer explained that the proposed consultation would run for six weeks, with a commencement date of 10 February 2021. The policy would be sent to all licensed drivers and operators as well as neighbouring local authorities and the taxi licensing coordinator at Thames Valley Police. District councillors, town and parish councils, as well as disability groups would also be included in the consultation. The comments from this consultation would be considered and a further report would be sent back to the General Licensing Committee with a summary as well as a final version of the policy, with the aim of adopting the new policy in June 2021. The officer did note that two errors had been identified in advance of the meeting, but these would be amended before the policy would go to consultation.

A question was raised on whether the policy should include wording to highlight the different requirements for children to wear a seatbelt depending on whether the vehicle is being used for commercial or private purposes. The officer clarified that such wording could be included in the policy and it was suggested that this could be raised during the consultation period.

An additional question was asked on whether drivers or firms had been involved in the production of the new policy or if they had been consulted in advance of the proposed consultation dates. The officer confirmed that the consultation would be the first time such parties would be involved on this policy due to the need to ensure no preferential treatment was given, but the officer also confirmed that feedback gathered over the previous years had been taken into consideration when updating the policy.

During debate, the committee expressed gratitude to the officers for the work that had gone into the policy. They were also in agreement that the proposed introduction of tariffs would be a positive aspect which would provide safeguards to the public from any excessive charges.

A motion moved and seconded to support the officer's recommendations was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to

- a. approve a consultation exercise to seek the views of the trade and relevant stakeholders on the revised policy, and
- b. to authorise the Head of Housing and Environment to make minor editorial changes before the document is sent out to consultation.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm

Chair

Date