

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

held on 19 January 2021

Present:

Cllr M Ali (Chairman)  
Cllr K Howard (Vice-Chair)

Cllr M A Bridgeman	Cllr R N Leach
Cllr G W Elson	Cllr R Mohammed
Cllr D Harlow	Cllr L M N Morales
Cllr S Hussain	Cllr C Rana

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee held on 6 October 2020 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor R Mohammed declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in minute item 5, Delegated Authority in Respect of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing; and 6, Coronavirus Service Update. The interest was such that Councillor Mohammed left the meeting during consideration of the items.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

**5. DELEGATED AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING LIC21-001**

The Chairman reported that the resolution recommended to Full Council regarding Delegated Authority in respect of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing had been referred back to the Committee. In addition to the report before the Committee, the Chairman stated that further representation had been received which could not be considered at the meeting due to constitutional limitations, and so the item was deferred until the next meeting of the Licensing Committee on 9 March 2021. The Chairman undertook to provide advance notice of such decisions to the Portfolio Holder for Licensing.

RESOLVED

That the report on Delegated Authority in Respect of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing be deferred to the meeting of the Licensing Committee on 9 March 2021.

**6. CORONAVIRUS SERVICE UPDATE LIC21-002**

Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer, introduced the report before the Committee which provided an update on the Licensing service in light of the pandemic. There were two recommendations for consideration by the Committee, firstly an extension for existing drivers to complete the BTEC or equivalent level two qualification for 'Introduction to Taxi and Private Hire' to 31 March 2023; and a delay for the implementation of the requirement for Operators to complete their Knowledge Tests before renewal to 31 March 2022. It was acknowledged that there had been a much reduced level of work for the taxi drivers over the past year and it would be fair to provide the drivers with more time to complete the work.

Joanne McIntosh, Legal Services Manager, advised the Committee that officers were recommending a further resolution in respect of the Vehicle Specification Policy (the ULEV Policy) which was due to be implemented in April 2021. Following the publication of the report, concern had been expressed by a number of drivers over being able to meet its requirement of purchasing a new vehicle by the deadline, due to financial hardship incurred during the pandemic. None of the representations from the drivers had made reference to opposing the policy. It was noted that the drivers had been able to access some funding from central Government as they were self-employed, although this had not covered the financial losses.

Following consultation with the Chairman and Portfolio Holder, it was proposed that the resolution be amended to include a third bullet point to read, "the implementation of the Vehicle Specification Policy (the ULEV Policy) in April 2021 be postponed until 1 January 2022, and a report scheduled to be received by the Licensing Committee in October 2021 providing an overview of Coronavirus and its effect on the trade, with specific reference to the Vehicle Specification Policy". The Committee was urged to agree the amendment due to the unprecedented times and the ongoing effect on the taxi trade.

Members welcomed the pragmatic approach taken by officers to support the trade. The Committee discussed the date of the proposed extension for the implementation of the Vehicle Specification Policy and felt that 1 January 2022 would be appropriate with a review scheduled by the Licensing Committee in October 2021. Regarding the BTEC (or equivalent) qualification, it was noted that the Council's website would be updated due to course providers altering their courses and associated weblinks.

RESOLVED That

- (i) The deadline for existing drivers to complete the BTEC (or equivalent) be extended to the 31 March 2023;
- (ii) The implementation of the requirement for Operators to complete their Knowledge Tests before renewal be delayed until the 31 March 2022; and

- (iii) the implementation of the Vehicle Specification Policy (the ULEV Policy) in April 2021 be postponed until 1 January 2022, and a report scheduled to be received by the Licensing Committee in October 2021 providing an overview of Coronavirus and its effect on the trade, with specific reference to the Vehicle Specification Policy.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 pm  
and ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_