

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE

held on 15 June 2021
Present:

Cllr R N Leach (Chairman)
Cllr M Ali (Vice-Chair)

Cllr M A Bridgeman	Cllr D Harlow
Cllr J Brown	Cllr I Johnson
Cllr S Dorsett	Cllr L M N Morales

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee held on 9 March 2021 and 24 May 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elson and Howard.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Ali for his work in chairing the Committee during the past Municipal Year and welcomed those Members and Officers who were attending their first meeting of the Committee.

5. BRIEF FOLLOW-UP FOLLOWING LICENSING TRAINING ON 9 JUNE 2021

Joanne McIntosh, Legal Services Manager, reported that the recent external training session on taxi matters had been informative and asked for feedback from Members of the Committee. It was noted that training on alcohol licensing would be arranged shortly.

The Committee felt that the training had been very helpful and well paced, however it could be useful to include case studies to assist Members with applying the principles learnt during the session, along with more interaction during the training. It was confirmed that

the slides from the training had been forwarded to Members and that the videos containing examples of Licensing Sub-Committees would be re-circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the update be received.

6. OVERVIEW OF LICENSING 2020-21 LIC21-005

Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer, introduced the report which summarised the work of the Licensing team during the 2020/21 financial year and the effects of the pandemic.

Work was stated to have been picking up for the taxi drivers, although around 100 drivers had chosen to not renew their vehicle licences during the past year whilst renewing their drivers' badges. The introduction of policies for knowledge tests, low emission vehicle requirements, BTEC course completion and door signs had been deferred due to the pandemic.

The points based system was stated to be progressing well, with a total of 11 drivers having received points for offences such as leaving a Hackney Carriage vehicle unattended, smoking in a licenced vehicle or poor driving. It was added that four taxi drivers had reached the limit of 12 points and would be appearing before the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee in July. The system was due for review in October 2021 by the Committee.

Over the past few months the ARG grants scheme had been implemented following the announcement of Government financial support for Taxi and Private Hire Drivers, with the aim of providing assistance with business costs involved in maintaining a licence. The Council had determined that drivers could claim £750 for the past year and total grant funding of £210,000 had been paid so far to the 280 drivers which had applied. Despite a reminder email, not all drivers had applied and there was no flexibility to extend the availability of the Government funding.

The Chairman and Committee members thanked the Licensing team for their hard work over the past year during a very challenging period. It was noted that applicants for Temporary Event Notices had been offered the chance to defer their event if it had been unable to take place due to Government restrictions. As the Civic Offices was beginning to re-open, the Licensing team was looking to enable face to face appointments and resuming the carrying out of knowledge tests. The Committee noted the general costs which had been incurred by taxi drivers and how the grant award of £750 compared with neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7. STATUTORY GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS LIC21-004

Matthew Cobb introduced the report informing Members of the new Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards which had been published on 21 July 2020 in relation to Taxi and Private Hire Standards, and how they compared with the Council's current standards. A further report would be received by the Committee at its meeting in October 2021 once officers had reviewed whether any changes would need to be implemented.

Members noted that it could be helpful for County-wide officers at neighbouring authorities to liaise regarding the changes. It was stated that the Surrey Licensing Officers were in discussion with Surrey Police regarding a single point of contact to provide notification of public protection risks and the Chairman agreed to draft a letter to Surrey Police in support. In addition, it was noted that the potential exploitation of county lines should be included within the safeguarding awareness course for taxi drivers.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the content for the statutory standards be noted; and
(ii) further reports detailing proposed changes to conditions contained in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy and any necessary consultation to comply with the statutory standards be received by the Committee as required.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____