

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

held on 10 March 2020

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 21 January 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 items 5, Introduction of a Points Based System for Taxi Drivers; 6, Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers; and 7, Review of Volkswagen Sharans following a Recent Review by Euroncap of their Safety Rating, arising from his position as a taxi driver. The interest was such that Councillor Mohammed left the Chamber during consideration of the items.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

**5. INTRODUCTION OF A POINTS BASED SYSTEM FOR TAXI DRIVERS LIC20-003**

The Committee received a report on the introduction of a points based system for taxi drivers, building on the Council's Criminal Convictions Policy which covered enforcement action for major offences. The report set out a framework for scaling the smaller minor offences through a Penalty Points system to enable the Licensing Authority to identify repeat offenders whilst also setting a threshold at which would result in a driver appearing

before a Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee. The Committee was being requested to approve the scheme for the purposes of consultation with the trade.

Matthew Cobb reported that the points based systems used by 36 local authorities had been considered and that a suitable threshold for calling a Sub-Committee was proposed to be 12 points.

Members were broadly supportive of the proposals. It was suggested that the points allocated by the Council for each offence should be a modal not average of the local authorities analysed; consultation should take place with Woking Access Group on disability issues; parking on zig zag lines by schools and crossings should be included; animals belonging to the operator being transported should only be an offence whilst on duty; and whether the number of penalty offences could be combined to reduce the overall total.

It was stated that the Licensing Authority would investigate any complaints received and conduct visits where appropriate before issuing the points. In the event that there was uncertainty over the identity of the licenced driver operating the vehicle, clarification from the registered owner would be required.

RESOLVED

That the Proposed Policy and Points Scheme be consulted on and presented back to the Licensing Committee in June with any necessary amendments made and accompanying feedback attached.

**6. INTRODUCTION OF A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL OPERATOR DOOR SIGNS TO BE VINYL STICKERS (NOT MAGNETS) LIC20-004**

The Committee received a report setting out a proposed change to the Private Hire Operators licensing regime, specifically the introduction of the regulation of materials used for Operators Door Signage.

Matt Cobb advised that the door signs enabled members of public to easily identify the taxi vehicles and that a number of drivers had stated that the magnetic signs did not stay on the car doors effectively. A consultation had taken place with all Private Hire licence holders, resulting in a very low response rate of 0.35%, equating to three responses. It was noted that in the event the a driver worked for more than one operator, two door signs could be displayed on the car door.

It was agreed that the proposal before the Committee should be put to a vote. In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the amendment were recorded.

In favour: Councillors G Elson, D Harlow, K Howard, S Hussain, R Leach, L Morales, C Rana.

Total in favour: 7

Against: Councillor M Bridgeman.

Total against: 1

Present not voting: Councillors M Ali.

Total present not voting: 1

The resolution was therefore carried by 7 votes in favour to 1 vote against.

RESOLVED

- That (i) a requirement for Operators' door signage to be a sticker/vinyl as opposed to magnetic is introduced in order to prevent accidental or intentional breaches of the Vehicle and Operators Licences; and  
(ii) a requirement for Operators' door signage is introduced to ensure that signage is no smaller than 210mm x 297mm and no larger than 800mm x 500mm to ensure that signage is visible and clear to the travelling public.

**7. A REVIEW OF VOLKSWAGEN SHARANS FOLLOWING A RECENT REVIEW BY EURONCAP OF THEIR SAFETY RATING LIC20-002**

The Committee received a report which contained an outline of the NCAP Safety Ratings and the change in the rating applied to Volkswagen Sharan cars from five stars to four. Matthew Cobb advised that the Council's policy for vehicle specifications stated that Private Hire vehicles must hold a safety rating of at least five to operate in the Borough. As the rating for the Volkswagen Sharan had been reduced, the report set out a number of options for the Committee to consider.

Following discussion Members felt that option 5 would be the most appropriate, which allowed the vehicles to remain licensed on the grounds that they had held a safety rating of 5 when originally approved. The option would allow Private Hire drivers to continue using their existing vehicles until they needed to be replaced, however no new Volkswagen Sharan cars would be licensed.

RESOLVED

That the Council honour the licences issued for Volkswagen Sharan Private Hire vehicles and only apply the safety rating of five requirement to new applications for vehicle licences.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 8.25 pm

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

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