

Minutes of a meeting of the **LICENSING COMMITTEE** held in the Function Room, South Holland Centre, Market Place, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1SS, on Thursday, 15 July 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

J Tyrrell (Chairman)
P A Redgate (Vice-Chairman)

A C Beal
F Biggadike
M D Booth

A Casson
G T D Rudkin
A R Woolf

C N Worth

In Attendance: Head of Public Protection, Licensing Officer, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Trainee

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors H J W Bingham, A C Cronin, J L King, J D McLean and G P Scalse

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

2. MINUTES

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

3. TAXI LICENSING STANDARDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Public Protection which set out the Taxi Licensing Proposals following consultation on the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

New standards had been issued by the Department of Transport in July 2020, which set out common core minimum standards that all Licensing authorities should implement. The Committee had previously considered the new standards at a meeting held on 10 December 2020, where it had been agreed that a consultation exercise be carried out.

As part of the consultation, all drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors had been contacted electronically or in writing and a notice had been published in both the local press and on the Council website. The Head of Public Protection confirmed that no feedback had been received during the consultation period.

The following points were raised regarding specific paragraphs within the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards:

- Regional Councillor Liaison Group (paragraph 3.13)

LICENSING COMMITTEE - 15 July 2021

- Officers confirmed that discussions would take place with authorities within Lincolnshire and neighbouring authorities to look at the scope and benefits of this group being set up.
- DBS Update Service (paragraphs 4.5 to 4.6)
 - Discussion took place as to how long current drivers would have to sign up to the update service.
 - It was agreed that an amendment be made to the Taxi Licensing Policy to require all drivers to renew their DBS annually and to agree to adopt the national standard to mandate drivers to sign up to the DBS Update Service.
- Licensee Self-Reporting (paragraphs 4.12 to 4.13)
 - Members agreed an immediate amendment to the Taxi Licensing Policy to change the timescale for licensee self-reporting from 7 days to 48 hours.
 - Members wanted to ensure that this change in policy was communicated effectively to drivers and operators.
- Referrals to the Disclosure Barring Service and the Police (paragraphs 4.14 to 4.16)
 - Members agreed to amend the Taxi Licensing Policy to adopt this standard.
- Complaints against Licensees (Paragraph 4.31)
 - Members questioned whether the design of the notices needed to be considered for different types of vehicles.
 - Officers confirmed that this would be taken into consideration.
 - Members agreed to adopt this standard and as a result, amend the Taxi Licensing Policy.
- Criminal Convictions & Rehabilitation Assessment of Previous Convictions (Paragraphs 5.15 to 5.17)
 - Members agreed to adopt the National Standard. This would be written into the Taxi Licensing Policy with immediate effect
- Language Proficiency (Paragraphs 6.14 to 6.15)
 - Members agreed to adopt this standard in principle, but officers would prepare a number of options detailing how this standard would be adhered to practically. These options would be presented to the Committee at a later date.
 - Members suggested that drivers who struggled with the Proficiency test could be signposted to Boston College for support.
- Criminality Checks for Vehicle Proprietors (Paragraphs 7.2 to 7.6)
 - The Head of Public Protection advised that most vehicle proprietors were already DBS checked.
 - Members agreed to adopt the standard with immediate effect.
- In Vehicle Visual and Audio Recording CCTV (Paragraphs 7.7 to 7.13)
 - Members asked whether CCTV was already mandatory at any other authorities.
 - Officers confirmed that it was not currently mandatory within any other Lincolnshire authority.
 - Members agreed to adopt this standard in principle and a report containing options for CCTV would be brought forward to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee.

LICENSING COMMITTEE - 15 July 2021

- **Criminality Checks for Private Hire Vehicle Operators (Paragraph 8.4)**
 - Officers advised that this standard was not currently included in the Taxi Licensing Policy but would be followed in practice.
 - Members agreed that this standard would be adopted and that the Taxi Licensing Policy would be amended to this effect.
- **Booking and Dispatch Staff (Paragraphs 8.8 to 8.12)**
 - Members agreed that these standards would be adopted with immediate effect and the Taxi Licensing Policy be amended to reflect this.
 - Members asked for clarification as to whether operators had to adopt their own policy for employing ex-offenders or whether they could adopt the Council's policy.
 - Officers advised that the Council could provide a standard wording for the policy that operators could use as a template.

AGREED:

- a) That the national Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards be adopted:
 - b) That the majority of the proposed actions and timescales, as detailed within Appendix A to the report, be adopted, with the following changes and considerations:
 - i. DBS Update Service (paragraphs 4.5 to 4.6) – that an amendment be made to the Taxi Licensing Policy to require all drivers to renew their DBS annually, and to agree to adopt the national standard to mandate drivers to sign up to the DBS Update Service;
 - ii. Licensee Self-Reporting (paragraphs 4.12 to 4.13) – that an immediate amendment be made to the Taxi Licensing Policy, to change the timescale for licensee self-reporting from 7 days to 48 hours, and that this change in policy be communicated effectively to drivers and operators; and
 - c) That the following standards be agreed in principle:
 - i. Language Proficiency (paragraphs 6.14 to 6.15) – that this standard to adopted in principle, that officers prepare a number of options detailing how this standard would be adhered to practically, and that these options be presented to the Committee at a later date;
 - ii. In Vehicle Visual and Audio Recording CCTV (paragraphs 7.7 to 7.13) – to adopt this standard in principle, and that officers prepare a report containing options for CCTV to be considered at the next meeting of the Licensing Committee.
- 4. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.**

There were none

(The meeting ended at 7.19 pm)

LICENSING COMMITTEE - 15 July 2021

(End of minutes)