

GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 28 July 2021 at 10:02 hours (at the conclusion of General Licensing Sub Committee)

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Ray Heffer in the Chair

Councillors Andrew Joesbury (Vice-Chair), Rose Bowler, Maxine Dixon, Mary Dooley, David Downes, Stan Fox, Evonne Parkin and Rita Turner.

Officers:- Kevin Shillitto (Solicitor), Charmaine Terry (Environmental Health Team Manager - Licensing) and Tom Scott (Governance Officer).

GLC1-21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

GLC2-21/22 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to be considered at the meeting.

GLC3-21/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

GLC4-21/22 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury.

RESOLVED that the minutes of General Licensing Committee on 5th November 2020 be accepted as a correct record.

GLC5-21/22 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY REVIEW

Committee considered a report of the periodic review of the Taxi and Private Hire policies which explained proposed amendments to the policies. The report also recommended a public consultation be carried out on the proposed amendments.

The proposals in the report would aim to:

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- 1) Ensure the policies are consistent with statutory guidance (Appendix 5) recommendations;
- 2) Increase the clarity of the policy, to ensure that licence holders and the public have a more detailed understanding of rights and responsibilities, and to ensure that the Joint Environmental Health Service and the Committee can ensure effective decision making;
- 3) Increase standards within the sector in relation to disability access and safety in line with the Equality Act 2010;
- 4) Improve medical assessment standards, fitness assessments for drivers, and cover undiagnosed conditions, to be consistent with other licensing authorities in the region (Appendix 6);
- 5) Update the policy in respect of legislative and application methods;
- 6) Ensure the definitions of criminal offences detailed in the policy are consistent with current legislation;
- 7) Improve safeguarding standards by requiring more detailed information of drivers assigned to a particular pick –up/job and training for operator’s staff;
- 8) Increase assurances as to the safety and history of licensed vehicles;
- 9) Improve customer service standards in the sector by including considerate parking and strengthening the requirements for vehicles to be clean and presentable.

Councillor Mary Dooley asked if Members had been allowed any input into the review up to this point. The Environmental Health Team Manager – Licensing explained that this particular review encompassed changes to the policies that had to be made by law, and Members would be able to highlight any issues they had with the policies once the public consultation began.

The three recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Committee notes the proposed amendments to the Taxi and Private Hire Policies.
- (ii) The Committee requires the Joint Assistant Director – Environmental Health to carry out a public consultation on the proposed amendments.
- (iii) The Joint Assistant Director presents a further report for consideration by the Committee on the outcome of the Public Consultation in order to consider the renewal of the Taxi and Private Hire Policy.

(Joint Assistant Director – Environmental Health)

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Committee considered a report to review (and approve for public consultation) amendments to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy to introduce mandatory CCTV in licensed taxis.

Members all agreed that putting CCTV cameras in taxis was a very positive idea that would increase safety.

The Chair asked if there was a certain standard the cameras must meet. The Solicitor explained that the technical specifications of the cameras were in the report.

Members asked questions about the amounts that operators would have to pay for the systems, and the Environmental Health Team Manager – Licensing explained that as noted in the report, the operators might have to pay £500-£800.

Members also asked questions about if the Licensing team would have enough officers to cope with the added demand of overseeing the new systems. The Environmental Health Team Manager – Licensing explained that the Licensing team had recently undergone a restructure and now had more officers dedicated to administrative work.

Councillor Andrew Joesbury asked what kind of tests would be done on the system in each car. The Solicitor explained that the systems would be installed by a certified person and tested and checked regularly.

Councillor David Downes suggested that to make it financially easier on the operators, the Council could give them the camera specifications and let them find the cheapest deal. The Solicitor explained that allowing operators freedom to purchase their own systems would be discussed in the consultation phase.

Councillor Ray Heffer moved and Councillor David Downes seconded that another recommendation be added to the two in the report which would read: "To explore funding to assist in the installing of these systems."

The Solicitor stated he would liaise with Finance officers, Procurement officers and the Police to find out what the Council could do in terms of funding.

Councillor Ray Heffer moved and Councillor Andrew Joesbury seconded the two recommendations in the report and the third recommendation just moved by Members.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members take forward the policy proposals;
- (ii) The attached policy proposal is approved for the purposes of consultation with the public, the taxi trade and with stakeholders;
- (iii) Officers explore funding to assist in the installing of these systems.

(Solicitor)

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The meeting concluded at 10:40 hours.