

## Licensing Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1AB, on 19 September 2019 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

Councillor Sam Adeniji (Chair)

Councillors Nicola Papanicolaou (Vice-Chair), Liz Boorman, Chris Collier, Sean MacLeod, Milly Manley and Ian White

**Officers in attendance:**

Stewart Bryant (Senior Specialist Advisor, Licensing and Pollution)  
Sue Lindsey (Specialist Advisor, Licensing)  
Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer, Democratic Services)  
Michele Wilkinson (Lawyer, Housing & Regulatory)

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor Imogen Makepeace had a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 but attended the meeting as an observer only having been given a dispensation to do so by Lewes District's Monitoring Officer.

**1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

**2 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Christine Brett, Stephen Gauntlett and Isabelle Linington.

**3 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**4 Urgent items**

There were none.

**5 Written questions from councillors**

There were none.

## 6 Taxi Licensing Guidance review

The Committee considered a report which requested that Members review the proposed implementation of Dual Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers licences as detailed within the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, as well as agree the method of introducing Disability, CSE, Safeguarding and equalities training.

The Senior Specialist Advisor (Licensing and Pollution) (SSALP) reminded the Committee that the current Lewes District Council (LDC) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance was introduced in early 2019. The introduction of Dual Drivers Licences had been agreed by the Committee at its last meeting on 14 February 2019 on the basis that LDC Officers considered it to be a minor administrative matter which would not unduly impact upon the taxi trade.

The SSALP highlighted, however, that some complaints had been received from the taxi trade, as they considered that such a change would disadvantage Hackney Carriage drivers. The Hackney Carriage drivers asserted that by giving all drivers the ability to become Hackney Carriage drivers would be detrimental to the trade.

As a result of the feedback from the taxi trade, Licensing Officers were of the opinion that the most appropriate and fair course of action would be to put the proposal concerning dual driving licences for consultation.

Discussion included:

- That consideration was given to the wheelchair accessibility of Hackney Carriages. Officers agreed that the matter be the subject of a report to the next meeting of the Committee;
- Whether or not additional taxi rank spaces could be created at the Lewes Railway Station. Officers clarified that they had been in conversation with East Sussex County Council who are in negotiation with Network Rail (the owners of the land outside Lewes Railway Station). East Sussex County Council are proposing to implement an 'experimental TRO' (transport regulation order) which will be subject to a public consultation prior to implementation;
- Whether or not current Hackney Carriage drivers would have the same benefits as new dual licenced drivers. Officers clarified that this was an issue they would consider following the proposed consultation;
- If the 20 MPH zone could be recognised during the testing procedure. Officers clarified that this forms part of the Taxi driving assessment of new applicants, but that a question related to this can be added to the knowledge test;
- Clarification on whether additional training would be required for current Hackney Carriage licence holders and how the training for new dual licence holders would compare. Officers clarified that they were

looking to create a balanced and fair system for both current licence holders and dual licence applicants, with some training remaining the same for current Hackney Carriage licence holders and additional training elements added for potential dual licence holders;

- English competency requirements. Licensing Officers explained that all new applicants must obtain at least an 80% pass rate in each category of the knowledge test; including a category in English comprehension; and
- The Committee expressed its concerns regarding the additional training fees for Hackney Carriage drivers and the uncertainty of cost upon licensing renewals after three years. Officers clarified that the initial fee would be a one-time fee with a cost of £30 per module, with 4 modules, totalling a sum of £120, with renewal of such training undertaken every 3 years (a cost for this part of the training could not be determined at the current time).

Resolved:

1. That the proposed implementation of Dual Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers licences as detailed within the Lewes District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, be noted;
2. That the Senior Specialist Advisor (Licensing and Pollution) be authorised to begin a 6 week consultation with the taxi trade and the public in relation to the proposed introduction of Dual Drivers Licences;
3. That that the results of the 6 week consultation with the taxi trade and the public in relation to the proposed introduction of Dual Drivers Licences be reported back to the Licensing Committee; and
4. That the method of delivery for an external online training package with certificate for Disabilities, CSE, Safeguarding and Equalities, be agreed.

**7 Date of next meeting**

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Licensing Committee would be called as necessary.

The meeting ended at 10.35am.

Councillor Sam Adeniji (Chair)