

Eastbourne Licensing Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 7 July 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Robin Maxted (Chair).

Councillors Colin Belsey, Sammy Choudhury, Penny di Cara, Peter Diplock (Deputy Chair), Amanda Morris, Colin Murdoch, Jim Murray, Colin Swansborough, Barry Taylor and Candy Vaughan

Officers in attendance:

Jo Dunk (Lead for Regulatory Services), Dean Love (Specialist Advisor – Licensing), Michele Wilkinson (Lawyer – Housing & Regulatory) and Emily Horne (Committee Officer).

1 Introductions

Members of the Committee and Officers present introduced themselves via roll call during the meeting.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

3 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Josh Babarinde.

4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct.

There were none.

5 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

6 Urgent items of business

There were none.

7 Right to address the meeting/order of business

The Chair reported that he had received one request to address the meeting.

8 Approval of additional licensing fees 2022/23

The Committee considered the report which sought its recommendation to Full Council that the additional licensing fee proposed within paragraph 1.6 be applied from September 2022.

The Regulatory Services Lead (RSL) presented the report highlighting that all new applicants for Hackney and Private Hire Dual Drivers Licence would be required to undergo an English Language proficiency test at a cost of £65. It also proposed that new applicants and existing licenced drivers would be required to undertake Safeguarding and Disability Awareness training at a cost of £65 per training course to be paid to an external provider as part of their application process. In addition, that all new applicants and current licensed drivers would be required to adhere to a 6 monthly DBS check, which could be undertaken through the gov.uk website or, alternatively, could be processed by Eastbourne Borough Council. The cost of the service for the Council would require an increase from £40 to £65 to take into account an administration fee, which would apply from September 2022 onward.

The Committee queried whether the Safeguarding and Disability Awareness training fee was a one-off payment or an annual payment. The RSL explained that the training fee, was at present, a one-off payment and that drivers would have to adhere to the Guidance to possess a dual drivers licence.

Councillor Taylor proposed a motion to agree the officer recommendations listed in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

Resolved (unanimous) that:

- 1) That Full Council be recommended to approve the additional Licensing fees as set out in the report for the English Proficiency Test, Safeguarding and Disability Awareness training, and 6 monthly DBS check.

9 Amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance April 2022.

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery regarding changes to the Eastbourne Borough Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance to include measures to protect passenger safety.

Appended to the report at Appendix 1 was the proposed headrest sticker and the amended Guidance was appended to the report at Appendix 2.

The Specialist Advisor – Licensing (SAL) presented the report. The Committee was asked to consider mandatory use of ‘How Did I Do’ internal stickers for customers to be given the opportunity to give feedback on the service received

and for the Eastbourne Borough Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance to be updated.

An amendment to the report was noted at paragraph 1.3, delete the words 'and further clarification over back seat dimensions'.

Members' questions included:

- Could the sticker include a contact telephone number for those who were unable to use email or scan QR codes? Officers agreed to include a contact telephone number.
- Could the colouring of the sticker be changed so as to meet disability/accessibility requirements for those that are visually impaired or dyslexic? Officers agreed to consider the colouring of the sticker.
- Could the stickers damage the vehicle? Officers confirmed they were placed in a protective sleeve and would not damage the vehicle.
- What would happen to a negative review that was unfounded? Officers confirmed that they were in regular contact with the trade and would investigate any allegations of misconduct. Positive responses would be acknowledged and passed to the trade.
- Could the stickers display a 'thumbs up or 'thumbs down' image to encourage positive reviews? Officers would enquire with the Design Team.

Councillor Taylor proposed a motion to include the civic badge logo on the sticker. This was seconded by Councillor Murdoch.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) that:

- 1) The Civic Badge be included on the sticker.

Councillor Diplock proposed a motion to agree the officer recommendations listed in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) that:

- 1) The Committee approves the changes to the Eastbourne Borough Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance within Appendix 2 of the report, and the sticker be amended to include the addition of a telephone number; the colouring checked so as to meet disability/accessibility requirements, and that Officers liaise with the Design Team regarding the 'thumbs up or thumbs down' image.

10 Supporting the transition to low vehicle or zero emission vehicles.

Mr Everson, Chair of the Eastbourne Eco Action Transport Network Group, addressed the Committee with a number of questions regarding the transition to low vehicle or zero emission vehicles. Where not discussed by the Committee, these would be responded to by email after the meeting.

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery for Members to consider ways of supporting the transition to low or zero emission vehicles in the taxi and private hire sector.

Appended to the agenda was the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, the Council's Climate Emergency Summary was appended at Appendix 2 and Appendices 3-6 included examples of practices in other Council areas.

The Regulatory Services Lead (RSL) presented the report highlighting the recommended changes to the Guidance.

An amendment was noted on Appendix 2, Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 Summary – that Councillor Swansborough had replaced Councillor Jonathan Dow as the Lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change.

Members' discussion included:

- More incentives were required to encourage drivers to switch to low vehicle or zero emission vehicles and a significant number of 'rapid' charging points would be needed to meet the needs of Eastbourne by 2030.
- What was the target number of electric charging points to be installed by 2030? Officers advised that details would be confirmed in the feasibility study.
- A concern was raised that in the past that the use of a fully electric vehicle had not been supported. Officers confirmed the Guidance now supported this.
- General concerns were raised regarding costs of cars, limited number of electric charging points and the logistics of charging vehicles on long distance jobs.
- What were the views of the Taxi Forum? Officers confirmed that the feasibility study would involve consultation with trade for them to express their views. Officers confirmed that some initial discussions had already been had with the Trade.
- When will the 15-year licence period start from - is it retrospective for drivers who already have hybrid cars? Officers confirmed the logistics of how existing vehicles were considered would be included in the feasibility study.

Councillor Swansborough proposed a motion to agree the officer recommendations listed in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Morris.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) that:

- 1) The Licensing Committee agrees that a feasibility study is undertaken into all options. The Lead for Regulatory Services to investigate grant funding to cover the costs of the feasibility study; and

- 2) The Licensing Committee agrees that, as an immediate incentive, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance be amended so that low and zero emission vehicles may have an extended licence span.

11 Date of the next meeting

That the next meeting of the Licensing Committee scheduled to commence at 6:00pm on Monday, 10 October 2022, be noted.

The meeting ended at 18:55 pm

Councillor Robin Maxted (Chair)