

Licensing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on 1 April 2021 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillor Sean MacLeod (Chair)
Councillors Christine Robinson (Vice-Chair), Liz Boorman, Roy Clay, Johnny Denis, Stephen Gauntlett, Isabelle Linington and Jim Lord

Officers in attendance:

Danielle Ball (Specialist Advisor, Licensing)
Jo Dunk (Senior Specialist Advisor, Environmental Health)
Ed Hele (Functional Lead, Quality Environment)
Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer, Democratic Services)
Paul Thornton (Specialist Advisor, Licensing)
Michele Wilkinson (Lawyer, Housing & Regulatory)

20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Sam Adeniji and Keira Rigden.

21 Declarations of interest

There were none.

22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

23 Urgent items

There were none.

24 Written questions from councillors

There were none.

25 Taxi Licensing Guidance Review

The Committee considered the report which detailed the results of the consultation on the proposed Lewes District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, and to agree a final Guidance document to be adopted on a date to be agreed.

The Specialist Advisor (Licensing) (SAL), Mr Thornton, presented the report and its findings, and highlighted the officer recommendations that the Committee was asked to consider.

Discussions included:

- Questions surrounding WAV vehicles and how many of the total number of drivers within Lewes District which were licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, operated WAV vehicles. Officers confirmed that there were 138 licensed Hackney Carriage Drivers, 5 of which had WAV vehicles, and a further 468 Private Hire Drivers.
- Why the safeguarding awareness training and the fit and proper test were detailed in the report but were not shown in the proposed Guidance. The SAL apologised and clarified that if the Committee chose to implement these points, he would ensure that they were properly referenced in the Guidance.
- Questions surrounding costs in relation to the safeguarding awareness training and whether or not the Council could use the money ringfenced to supplement the fees for current drivers. Officers confirmed that they would research the possibility and feedback the results to the Chair.
- Questions surrounding age restrictions referenced in paragraph b in section 3.1 of the report which related to electric and hybrid vehicles, and if they would fall under exceptional circumstances. The SAL explained that in the case of electric vehicles, they would have to be approved on their merits and that a wider discussion would need to be had as to whether they should be subject to the ten-year rule.
- Whether or not there was a cut-off date for magnetic plate removal. The SAL confirmed that there was currently no cut-off date in place.

The Committee had a detailed discussion regarding CCTV and the cost implications. Although a majority of the Committee agreed that CCTV systems be installed in all Hackney Carriage vehicles within the District beginning October 2023, Councillor Linington requested that her objection to making CCTV mandatory be noted in the body of the minutes.

Resolved:

- 1) That the proposed Lewes District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed subject to the following amendments:
 - a. That CCTV systems be installed in all Hackney Carriage vehicles within the District beginning October 2023; and
 - b. That Officers present alternative solutions in relation to WAV licences as set out in section 3.1 (ff) of the report, and provide a further report to the Committee on the findings; and

- 2) That the Senior Specialist Advisor (Licensing), take the necessary steps to implement the changes as set above, produce a final Guidance document and publish it on a date to be agreed by the Chair of the Licensing Committee.

26 Date of next meeting

Resolved:

That it be noted that the next meeting of the Licensing Committee is scheduled to commence at 10:30am on Thursday, 24 June 2021.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.

Councillor Sean MacLeod (Chair)