

LICENSING COMMITTEE

14 September 2021

Present:

Councillor Chris Buswell (Chair)
Councillors Branston, Begley, Foale, Holland, Moore, J, Vizard, Warwick, Wood and Wright

Apologies:

Councillors Mitchell, K, Newby and Quance

Also present:

Service Lead - Environmental Health & Community Safety, Legal Advisor, Principal Licensing Officer (LS), Principal Licensing Officer and Democratic Services Officer (MD)

4 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976

6 **PRINCIPAL LICENSING OFFICER - LEE STAPLES**

The Service Lead - Environmental Health & Community Safety, requested an addendum to the minutes to note that the Principal Licensing Officer - Lee Staples, would be leaving the Council employment at the end of September. He expressed his thanks for all the good work that had been undertaken by the officer during his time in the role. He paid particular tribute to the legislative changes made to policies and practices, that Lee had managed, and most notably to the work that had been done to the Taxi Licensing Policy.

The Chair expressed her thanks on behalf of the Licensing Committee to the Principal Licensing Officer for all his work and support.

7 **DRAFT STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY 2021-2023**

The Licensing Committee received the report to review the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy, which previously came into effect in January 2019. The Council had a statutory responsibility to review the policy every three years and the updated policy would need to be approved by 31 January 2022.

There had been a small number of minor amendments made to the policy and it was proposed that the draft statement be shared with the statutory consultees listed in Section 349 (3) of The Gambling Act 2005 to attain their views on the draft policy, rather than undertake a public consultation.

Particular reference was made to:-

- The Policy had been developed in conjunction with the Gambling Commission to ensure it was still fit for purpose;
- The minor amendments included changes to profiles and job titles; and
- The statutory consultees would have the opportunity to comment on any changes.

Member's commented on the good work that had previously been undertaken, and supported the minor changes to the Policy.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee approve for the draft Policy to be shared with the statutory consultees, having given due consideration of the document.

8 **REVISION OF THE TAXI FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Licensing Committee received the report which sought to review the Terms of Reference for the Taxi Forum. The Terms of Reference required amendment to ensure that there was appropriate representation and that the forum had a clear purpose in the work it performed. Though the Licensing Authority had no mandatory duty to hold Taxi Forum meetings, it was considered as more suitable means to engage with taxi representation and maintain a constructive dialogue.

The proposed amendments had been agreed with taxi trade representatives at the Taxi Forum meeting held on 28 July 2021, following suggestions made from a Licensing Working Group, to improve the function of the Taxi Forum. There were also key issues that needed engagement with the Taxi Trades, which included changes to the vehicle emission standards, legislative changes and the introduction of a points based disciplinary system.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the Splitting of the meetings between the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trades, would address conflicting opinions between the trades and allow them a dedicated forum for their requirements;
- Meetings would be held every six months, with the option for the Chair of Licensing to convene a meeting where required;
- the separate meetings would be held on the same day with set time constraints;
- Meetings would continue to be held on Zoom, which had proven to be more productive and improved engagement with the taxi trades;
- the proposed changes would be continuously reviewed, to ensure they are suitable; and
- no objections had been received at the Taxi Forum meeting held on 28 July, with attendees being supportive of the amendments. Since the meeting one issue on the frequency of the meetings had been made from the Chair of the Exeter St David's Taxi Association.

In response to questions from Members, the Service Lead - Environmental Health & Community Safety stated:-

- There were two Hackney Carriage Associations, represented by a Chair and Deputy Chair from each association and up to three Private Hire company representatives. The Chair of Licensing had the power to allow additional representatives as required; and
- There had been no issues for the representatives using Zoom, which had significantly improved the administration of the Taxi Forum meetings.

Members supported the changes to the Terms of Reference, and noted that the Membership would also include Police and Taxi Marshalls, as well as the means to include additional representation as required.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee approve terms of reference as detailed in Appendix A of the report presented at the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 5.52 pm

Chair