

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil. on Tuesday 13 December 2022.**

(2.00 pm - 2.56 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor David Recardo (Chairman)

Pauline Lock                      Martin Wale  
Crispin Raikes

**Also present on-line via Zoom:**

Jason Baker                      Tony Lock  
Kevin Messenger

**Officers**

Jo Morris                      Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)  
Rachel Lloyd                  Specialist (Licensing)  
Ian Timms                      Yeovil Refresh Project Manager

**Note:** All decisions were approved without dissent unless shown otherwise.

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### 14. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 20 September 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee meeting held on 17 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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### 15. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dave Bulmer, Adam Dance, Karl Gill, Jenny Kenton, Wes Read, Paul Rowsell, Andy Soughton and William Wallace.

It was noted that Councillors Jason Baker, Tony Lock and Kevin Messenger joined the meeting on-line. (non-voting).

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### 16. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by members.

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## **17. Public Participation at Committees (Agenda Item 4)**

Public participation was taken at the time the item was discussed.

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## **18. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 5)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Licensing Committee was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 10.00am at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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## **19. Permission to Apply for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence (Agenda Item 6)**

The Specialist – Licensing explained that the report related to an application for a vehicle licence for a vehicle that had not been licensed before and did not meet the policy requirements in terms of the vehicle standard. She said that the Council had a policy which stated that the Council would only issue licences to vehicles which met the current euro standard except where the vehicle was currently licensed, and a renewal application was submitted. The emissions policy was introduced for environmental reasons to help reduce the number of older vehicles which have higher harmful emissions.

The Specialist – Licensing advised that the applicant had stated that he was not aware of the requirement for vehicles presented for licensing for the first time to be Euro 6 although the information was available on the council's website and the applicant was informed when the policy was changed in April of this year.

The Committee was addressed by the applicant who explained that he had bought the vehicle two weeks before the plate was due to expire on his older car and was not aware of the requirement for new vehicles to be Euro 6 standard and did not see the information on the website and as he worked solely by himself, he did not speak to other taxi drivers. His new vehicle was a safer four-wheel drive vehicle and had lower mileage. He said that he would face financial difficulties and losses if he had to sell the vehicle.

In response to questions, Members were informed of the following:

- There were both hackney carriage licensed vehicles and private hire licensed vehicles which were not up to the current euro standard and the policy allowed people to renew those vehicles going forward and there was no cut off point where a vehicle would not be licensed.
- There had been some cases in the past where a vehicle had not been renewed in time and the policy had been applied.
- The applicant's older vehicle had been re-plated in the meantime but would be replaced by his new vehicle.
- The licence holder for the plate of the older vehicle could transfer it to another driver if the vehicle was sold to another SSDC licensed driver.
- The applicant had held a private hire vehicle licence for approximately 14 years.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed and seconded to accept the application on the grounds that the applicant had demonstrated exceptional circumstances. A vote was taken and the proposal was unanimously approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Licensing Committee accept the application on the grounds that the applicant had demonstrated exceptional circumstances.

*(Vote: unanimous in favour)*

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## **20. Permission to Apply for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence (Agenda Item 7)**

The Specialist – Licensing advised that the application related to a vehicle which was previously licensed by the Council, however, the applicant did not submit the application to renew the licence before the expiry, therefore, it was being treated as a new application. The vehicle was not compliant with the current Euro standard. The applicant was asking the Committee to consider departing from the policy so he could apply to licence his vehicle.

In response to a question, members were advised that the applicant had missed his renewal date by two or three days.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed and seconded to accept the application on the grounds that the applicant had demonstrated exceptional circumstances. A vote was taken and the proposal was unanimously approved.

The applicant said that his company undertook a lot of work for Somerset County Council transporting special needs children and working with hospitals. He wished to draw the Committee's attention to the costs and issues associated with purchasing wheelchair accessible vehicles that were compliant with the Euro 6 standard and said that many operators and individuals were struggling with the costs associated with running their business.

**RESOLVED:** That the Licensing Committee accept the application on the grounds that the applicant had demonstrated exceptional circumstances.

*(Vote: unanimous in favour)*

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## **21. Consultation on Hackney Carriage Ranks in Yeovil Town Centre (Agenda Item 8)**

The Yeovil Refresh Project Manager presented the report which sought members approval to carry out a consultation on the position of hackney ranks in Yeovil town centre. He outlined a summary of the proposals and the consultation requirements. He also advised that the two vehicle rank at the base of Hendford would also be retained and be included as part of the consultation.

During the discussion on the item, members noted that the two disabled parking spaces proposed to be situated half way down Silver Street would be located on a steep slope and felt that they would perhaps would be better relocated at the top where the existing taxi rank was located. In response, the Yeovil Refresh Project Manager said that he could seek views on this as part of the consultation.

At the conclusion of the debate, members supported the proposals and unanimously approved the recommendation of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Licensing Committee support the Yeovil Town Centre Hackney Rank consultation and recommend that Council approve the approach.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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Chairman