

Minutes of a Meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE, on Monday, 24 June 2024 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Simon Carswell (Chair)

Cllr Peter Clayton

Cllr Tony Lock

Cllr Brian Smedley

Cllr Hugh Davies

Cllr Tony Robbins

Cllr Andy Soughton

36 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillors Lance Duddridge, Marcus Kravis, Martin Lovell, Mike Murphy and Tom Power.

37 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

Resolved that the minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on 11 April 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

38 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

Councillors present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor of a Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

SOMERSET COUNCILLOR	CITY, TOWN AND/OR PARISH COUNCIL
Simon Carswell	Street Parish Council
Peter Clayton	Burnham Highbridge Town Council
Tony Lock	Yeovil Town Council
Tony Robbins	Wells City Council

Brian Smedley	Bridgwater Town Council
Andy Soughton	Yeovil Town Council

39 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions submitted for the meeting.

40 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing - Agenda Item 5

The Licensing Manager, John Rendell, introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the Council's hackney carriage and private hire licensing function. He also detailed work being carried out to harmonise the predecessor councils taxi policies.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried what the timeframes were for consolidating the policies.
The Licensing Manager advised that the draft policy document was currently being worked on and he was hopeful that it should be ready for consultation before the end of the year.
- Councillors queried whether there would be a proposed percentage of accessible vehicles set within the policy.
The Licensing Manager highlighted that each former district council had different rules for accessible vehicles. He suggested that work was carried out on harmonising the policies first and then he could focus on work on accessibility rules as that would require further detailed consultation with taxi users. He further highlighted work that was being carried out to improve and promote the details held on the Equality Register.
- Councillors raised concern on section 3.10 of the report which proposed that training for taxi drivers was carried out by an external provider and would be online only. The reasons why the concern had been raised was due to a recent Regulatory Sub-Committee. Councillors suggested that the best working practice should be to hold the training face to face and be provided by council officers.
The Licensing Manager advised that work on the policy was still in progress and that he was happy to take feedback on these areas.
- Councillors queried whether officers carried out mechanical checks on vehicles.
The Licensing Manager confirmed that checks were still carried out but there was reliance on the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Police and that they were infrequent in nature. He also encouraged members of the public to report any concerns they had on taxi vehicles.

- Councillors thanked officers for their work on the policy.

Resolved that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee noted the report.

41 Minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committees - Agenda Item 6

Resolved that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee noted the minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings as attached in the agenda.

(The meeting ended at 2.22 pm)

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CHAIR