



**MINUTES OF LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING DATE** **Wednesday, 19 February 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Matthew Lynch (Chair), Councillor Margaret France (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Terry Brown, Mark Clifford, Jean Cronshaw, Gordon France, Danny Gee, Tom Gray, Steve Holgate, Laura Lennox, Joyce Snape and John Walker

**OFFICERS:** Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Nathan Howson (Enforcement Team Leader (Licensing)), Carl Gore (Enforcement Officer (Licensing and Empty Properties)), Stefanie Leach (Solicitor) and Philippa Braithwaite (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Val Caunce, Sheila Long and Debra Platt

**20.L.116 Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations.

**20.L.117 Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

**20.L.118 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 13 November 2019 of Licensing and Public Safety Committee**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee held on Wednesday, 13 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.**

**20.L.119 Minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committees**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committees held on 6 November, 4 December 2019 and 5 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**20.L.120 Minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committees**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee held on 13 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.**

## **20.L.121 Implementation of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles**

Nathan Howson, Enforcement Team Leader (Licensing), presented a report of the Director (Customer and Digital) requesting approval to go out to formal consultation on proposals regarding the implementation of a designated list of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) under the provisions of the Equality Act 2020, an amendment to the conditions on vehicle types to enable rear wheelchair access for private hire vehicles, and minor policy changes to improve the application process for taxi licensing.

Members discussed the report, noting that exemptions to the duties placed on drivers of designated wheelchair accessible taxis and PHVs would only be given to drivers with medical or physical conditions or disabilities which made it unreasonably difficult for them to provide the sort of physical assistance required. Members were advised that the natural turnover of drivers made it unlikely that the majority of WAV drivers would hold exemptions.

Members discussed the availability of taxis during peak times (i.e. during the school run) and it was noted that different business models were used at different authorities to provide WAVs when required. The Chair advised that discussions with the trade at Licensing Liaison Panel meetings had highlighted financial difficulties for drivers undertaking WAV journeys and that the proposals in this report (i.e. allowing rear access for Private Hire vehicles) sought to address these. Members agreed this was a positive move forward as the demand for WAV journeys was increasing.

**RESOLVED - That the Licensing and Public Safety Committee agree:**

- 1. The approach to consultation;**
- 2. The decision to report responses to the consultation back to Committee for approval, and/or authorisation by a delegated officer, is made by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with a delegated officer;**
- 3. That a delegated officer may grant and/or refuse applications for an Exemption from the duties under the Act;**
- 4. To update the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy once changes are approved.**

## **20.L.122 Support Provided for Licensing Applications**

The Chair advised that he had been made aware of failures by applicants to disclose relevant information because of difficulties in reading, understanding, and completing the paperwork involved.

Members discussed the issue and agreed that some wording should be included to demonstrate that assistance was available but that the onus should still be on the applicant to request the Council for this. It was agreed that the availability of assistance should be consistent for all residents accessing services, and noted that the current Customer Charter stated that "If you have a particular requirement, or need support in accessing our services, we will do all that we can to ensure that you receive this." This Charter was in the process of being reviewed and the Committee's concerns would be included.

**RESOLVED – That wording be added to Licensing applications clarifying that assistance could be given to applicants in certain circumstances upon request.**

Chair

Date