



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Singh Johal (Chair)

Councillor Adatia
Councillor Joshi

Councillor Whittle

Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Pantling

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8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Byrne, Chauhan, Karavadra and Pickering.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

11. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

12. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations and

statements of case had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

13. TAXI VEHICLE AGE POLICY - CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services submitted a report, providing the Committee with an update on the process for renewing taxi driver licences (hackney and private hire) which had been revised in February 2023.

The Head of Regulatory Service provided the Committee with a detailed introduction to the report, it was noted that:

- The current maximum age for a vehicle to be first licensed was 5 years. The maximum age a vehicle can be licensed was 11 years.
- A public consultation was currently live on the Council's website and had been brought to the attention of drivers licensed under Leicester City Council and various interested parties by direct email.
- Hackney and private hire licences must be reviewed before they expire. They are sent a reminder 6-8 weeks before their existing license is due to expire, to allow sufficient time for them to apply and submit the supporting information.
- The number of hackney carriages had been declining for some time, for a number of factors including the cost of a suitable vehicle.
- Private hire vehicles do not have to meet the same specification as hackney carriages and which allows licence holders a wider choice, but they had also reported financial pressures.
- Leicester City Council's current vehicle age policy required all vehicles that were being licensed for the first time to be no older than 5 years, and for all vehicles being renewing their private hire licence to be no older than 11 years.
- Other licensing authorities have different policies on vehicle age, including Wolverhampton, where there is an upper limit of 11.5 years but no limit on the age of a vehicle being licensed for the first time.
- The target for manufacturers to meet the zero emission vehicle mandate had been extended from 2030 to 2035. It will only apply to new vehicle sales.
- Representatives of the taxi trade had requested a review of the current policy. This is a reasonable request, as the policy hasn't been reviewed for a number of years.
- It has been proposed to consult on the council's vehicle age policy. The trade had asked for an extended policy, but it is also appropriate to ask whether the policy should remain the same or even be reduced. Officers suggest the consultation should include the following options:

Renewal age limit – currently 11 years

- Extend the upper age limit by 1, 2, 3 or 4 years
- Retain the upper age limit
- Reduce the upper limit, with an option for the respondent to say

- what they think
- the limit should be
- Ask respondents to give reasons for their answers

Entry age limit – currently 5 years

- Extend the lower age limit by 1 year
- Retain the lower age limit
- Reduce the lower limit, with an option for the respondent to say what they think
- the limit should be
- Ask respondents to give reasons for their answers

The City Mayor had agreed that there would be a temporary relaxation of the upper and lower age limits whilst the consultation was carried out. This would temporarily extend the upper age limit to 12 years and the lower age limit to 6 years. Any vehicles over the age of 11 that were relicensed under the temporary policy will be required to undergo an additional inspection at the Vehicle Testing Station, meaning they are tested every 4 months instead of every 6 months.

As part of the discussions and response to Member questions it was noted that:

Access to the consultation would be emailed to current license holders and interested parties. This would direct them to the councils website.

The comparison of hackney carriages and black cabs should only be against other cities and not counties that use private hire vehicles with separate plates.

The London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC) produce hybrid hackney carriages, but they were not affordable. There was currently no volume producer of hackneys looking at electric vehicles. The cost currently was around £67000.

The duration licensed drivers and interested parties would have to respond to the consultation was 6 weeks. The results would then be analysed and brought to the next meeting.

Engagement was currently ongoing with other organisations and interested parties including the police, disability organisations and the voluntary sector.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Licensing Committee members agree with the proposal for the upper and lower age limit.
- 2) That the option is available for consultees to give reasons for their answers.
- 3) The report be noted.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Members asked the Licensing Team Manager if it was possible for objectors, representees and third parties to attend licensing hearings virtually. The Licensing Team Manager informed the committee they were currently working with other Local Authorities and the Legal Team to look at that possibility. It was confirmed that Members on the Licensing Panel must attend the hearing in person.

Members further asked if they work could be done on the lack of transparency of late licenses in the city.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 18.55.