



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Held: TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Hunter (Chair)
Councillor Pickering (Vice Chair)
Councillor Singh Johal (Vice Chair)

Councillor Cank

Councillor Gee

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22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Fonseca.

Councillor Sangster, Councillor Shelton and Councillor Thomas were absent, no apologies having been received.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

25. PETITIONS

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

26. 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.

27. TAXI STRATEGY - CONSULTATIONS

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the forthcoming vehicle consultation.

The Chief Licensing Officer explained that the current policies and procedures were being reviewed and draft proposals required consultation. Members of the Committee were invited to consider the draft proposals which were planned to be consulted upon in the New Year and provide any comments for the Executive.

Members of the Committee discussed each of the proposals which included comments as follows:

Proposal 1 Application process: Supported

Proposal 2 Engine Emissions:

Members noted that the proposal was moving from Euro 4 emission standard to Euro 5 then Euro 6 in a staged process to improve emission standards. Of the current fleet of black cabs 110 were Euro 4 standard.

Members discussed the life span of vehicles and the impact of imposing changes on vehicle owners as well as the effect of any possible daily charge being introduced from 2021 if a Clean Air Zone is introduced.

Members were informed that all vehicle owners would be written to and sent the consultation inviting their responses to all of the proposals before any decision was taken to change policy. Members also discussed the grant scheme to help drivers take up ULEV taxi's noting there was a statement within the consultation around that.

Members suggested that the proposal include the possibility of some leeway for Euro 5 vehicle owners.

Proposal 3 Vehicle Age:

Members noted that vehicle age for ULEVs was explored in early 2019, legal advice then was that it was not appropriate to have different age policies based on the method of propulsion of vehicles. ULEV's were newer and there was no data on longevity, so there was now a need to look at all vehicles and the proposal was for further investigation to be carried out regarding an appropriate age policy. Members supported this proposal.

Proposal 4 CCTV:

Members noted that the policy currently did not require CCTV to be fitted in vehicles however it was appropriate to consider this and as a responsible authority to give drivers guidance on CCTV. Members felt it would be good for

safety but were concerned it may be open to abuse. Members were advised that access to the CCTV and recordings could be restricted. Members discussed the mechanism for CCTV in vehicles and how that would deter or modify behaviour of those in the vehicles. It was commented that access to CCTV would prove or disprove any allegations and Rotherham was cited as an example of one of the first authorities to introduce CCTV. Members were satisfied that proposal 4 should be consulted upon.

Proposal 5 Windscreens and windows:

Members noted that it was in the interests of safety that whatever goes on in the vehicle was visible and proposal 5 was supported.

Proposal 6 and 7 General Construction: Supported

Proposal 8 Fuel tanks: Supported

Proposal 9 Fire extinguishers: Supported

Proposal 10 Wheelchair facilities: Supported

Proposal 11 Paintwork and body finishes: Supported

Proposal 12 Passenger seats: Supported

Proposal 13 Passenger compartment:

It was confirmed that it was a legal requirement for all passengers to wear a seat belt if there was one available. Drivers were responsible for themselves and children wearing seat belts; passengers over 14 were responsible for themselves. Members supported this proposal.

Proposal 14 Fare table and number plate:

Members were informed that this proposal was also included in the driver consultation and it was suggested that allowing an advertising frame could allow some advertising in a uniform manner. Members supported this proposal.

Proposal 15 Taximeter:

Members queried whether the taximeters were calibrated and were advised that it was a requirement that all taximeters were calibrated and checked, the taximeters were then sealed and returned with a certificate. The Testing Station checked the certification and that there was no tampering and the taxi was test driven over a short distance to check the taximeter. Members noted that there was a switch on fee at the start of journeys, this could be different depending on time of day and the fare table should clearly state the rates. Members supported this proposal.

Proposal 16 Radio apparatus:

Members commented that there should be tighter rules around using mobiles with ear pieces and hands-free devices as these were still a distraction and the drivers focus should be on the road. Members suggested that the proposal should define hands-free mobile phones and usage, subject to including this

suggestion Members supported the proposal.

Proposal 17 Livery: Supported

Proposal 18, 19 and 20 Advertisements:

Members noted that there had been some recent requests for top box advertising on vehicle roofs which had been refused under the current policy. There was some feeling that these were a distraction to other road users but if the authority were to allow this there should be a consistent specification. Members suggested that a comparison be done with other authorities. Subject to these comments Members supported proposals 18, 19 and 20.

Proposal 21 Maintenance: Supported

Proposal 22 Private Hire General Construction: Supported

Proposal 23 Passenger Compartment: Supported

Proposal 24 Fuel: Supported

Proposal 25 Engine capacity: Supported

Proposal 26 Livery, paintwork and body finishes: Supported

Proposals 27 and 28 Advertisements: Supported

Proposals 29, 30 and 31 Wheelchair Facilities: Supported

Proposal 32 Display of licence: Supported

Proposal 33 Braking: Supported

Proposal 34 Maintenance: Supported

Proposal 35 a) Insurance, b) Vehicle examination and testing, c) Proof of ownership, d) Named drivers: Supported

Proposals 36 & 37 Proprietors:

Members queried why they did not receive a full list of convictions when considering drivers licences and were advised that an enhanced check was only allowed for prescribed occupations. Members supported these proposals.

Proposal 38 Discreet plating:

Members were informed that there were a number of vehicles in the system that operated discreetly and there were specific operators who did executive work. Members felt it was important to ensure these were monitored and supported the proposal.

Proposal 39 Standard conditions: Supported

Proposal 40 Reporting of collisions: Supported

Proposal 41 & 42 General guidance: Supported

Members reflected on whether there were other matters that should be included. An area of concern was raised relating to sexual exploitation and Members were advised that drivers were required to take that training within 3 months and a proposal was included in the driver consultation to make that a pre-licence condition. Members also suggested that training awareness should be given around accessibility and wheelchair guidance as well as guidance on assistance dogs.

A further concern was raised in relation to terrorist activity and the risk of terrorists using vehicles as weapons and it was suggested that Prevent training be provided to drivers too.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report and draft consultation paper be noted,
2. That the comments of the Committee be fed back to the Executive Member.

28. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

29. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.05pm