



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Hunter (Chair)
Councillor Pickering (Vice Chair)

Councillor Cank

Councillor Gee

Councillor Dr. Moore

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30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Fonseca, Shelton, Singh Johal and Thomas.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meetings held on 22 October 2019 and 10 December 2019 (Special Meeting) be approved as correct records.

33. PETITIONS

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

34. 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.

35. CONSIDERATION OF THE RENAULT VOYAGER RX 8 VEHICLE FOR LICENSING AS A HACKNEY CARRIAGE

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report which allowed the Committee to consider approving a new vehicle for licensing as a hackney carriage. Mr Neil Stewart from manufacturers Voyager MPV was present at the meeting.

The Licensing Team Manager (Policy) presented the report and drew attention to the compliance summary in the report, and options available to Members.

At 5.40pm the Chair adjourned the meeting to enable Members to inspect the vehicle which was parked outside at City Hall. Members inspected the vehicle and observed the operation of the wheelchair ramp, anchorage points for wheelchairs, and seating arrangements in the vehicle.

At 5.49 the meeting was reconvened with all Members present who were present when the meeting was adjourned.

Following inspection of the vehicle, the following points were made:

- It was observed the vehicle had ample room in the back, with fold-up seats for ease of access for wheelchairs.
- The step into the vehicle was wide but required a reflective strip.
- It was noted the ramp was quite steep if not opened onto a kerb, but this was the case most vehicles with ramps, and the Renault Voyager RX8 was no exception.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and Mr Stewart for attending the meeting. The Chair recommended the vehicle be approved for licensing as a Hackney Carriage as an exception. The Chair further recommended that the steps into the vehicle have a reflective strip added to aid access into and alighting from the vehicle.

RESOLVED:

that:

1. The Licensing and Public Safety approve the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage.
2. The steps to the vehicle be fitted with a reflective strip to aid access and exit from the vehicle.

The reasons for the Members making their decision were that the areas that the vehicle was not compliant with the Council's conditions for Fitness for a Hackney Carriage were outweighed by the benefits of licensing the vehicle.

36. PASSENGER AND TRANSPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Director of Housing submitted a report which provided the Committee with an overview of Passenger and Transport Services (PATs) and provided an

insight into the contract management processes in relation to the taxi framework. Committee Members were recommended to note the report.

Anisha Mistry, Passenger and Transport Services, presented the report, which was written in response to questions raised at a previous Licensing and Public Safety Committee meeting.

It was reported that PATs worked closely with colleagues in Adult Social Care and Children's Services. PATs had several processes and checks and balances were in place for the service and were outlined in the report, for example, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for drivers and passenger assistants (PAs). It was noted that a penalty points system was due to commence in August 2020 when a new framework agreement begins.

In response to Members' questions, the following information was noted:

- Appropriate training, such as Child Sexual Exploitation, or specific medical training was required to be undertaken by individual drivers and PAs prior to undertaking any contract work.
- Only providers under the Council's framework agreement were used. It was noted there were currently 23 providers on the list. The Chair requested the list of providers be emailed to her, with the providers who undertook contract work highlighted. It was noted a new framework agreement would commence in August 2020.
- Members stated a crucial role was played by providers with children with special needs. Members were informed the providers would undertake a recruitment process, with drivers and PAs having enhanced DBS checks, and having 'meet and greet' meetings with parents who had a say in the selection of persons transporting their child. To provide a consistent service with minimal disruption, the driver would transport the child throughout the year and would be trained to deal with any ailments and individual needs of the passenger.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. A list of providers with those who undertook contract work highlighted be provided to the Chair.

37. ALCOHOL RELATED HARM AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Director of Public Health submitted a presentation to the Committee on alcohol related harm and the role of licensing. The Committee Members were recommended to note the information provided.

Julie O'Boyle, Consultant in Public Health, delivered the presentation. The following points were made:

- It is a manifesto commitment to develop and implement an alcohol strategy

for the city. Public Health are leading on this working with internal and external partners.

- The risk of alcohol harm increases with increasing consumption,
- There were 24k alcohol associated deaths in the UK in 2017, with the cost to the NHS estimated at £3.5billion, and cost to society at £21billion.
- Less than 20% of people in need of treatment for alcohol dependence were getting the support they need.
- The number of liver disease deaths was rising.
- The rates of drinking amongst younger people have fallen over the last few years, but those aged 55-64 were drinking more frequently and harmfully.
- Those in higher income households were more likely to drink every day, though the more severe alcohol harm was experienced in the lower income households, known as the alcohol harm paradox.
- Positive news for Leicester was 51% did not drink alcohol (self-reported). The regional average for abstinence was 13.5%, and the national average 15%. Abstinence in Leicester was higher amongst the Asian and Black British population.
- The LCC Health and Wellbeing survey commissioned by the Public Health team noted that 2% of the local population report drinking alcohol every day.
- Our local survey also shows that the highest rates of drinking alcohol were amongst white males 55 years and over and was reflective of the national picture.
- Leicester has a statistically significant higher rate of alcohol related hospital admissions in men compared to the national average.
- Alcohol related hospital admissions for women in Leicester were similar to the England average. In 2017/18 there was the equivalent of 4,400 alcohol related hospital admissions for men in Leicester and 2,200 for women.
- Maps in the presentation outlined the higher drinking areas, mainly the city centre and west Leicester. Harm was concentrated in the more deprived parts of the city. Knighton and Western Park had admission rates significantly lower than the Leicester average.
- When looking at the mortality rate, women were similar to the national rate, but men were higher. Reported as a rolling average, approximately 30 men and 8 women a year die from an alcohol specific illness.
- Leicester had a higher rate of licensed premises per square kilometre than comparator authorities. The number of premises to consume alcohol per 1,000 of the population was also higher than the England average. It was an important figure to note as it was known that availability was one of the drivers for alcohol consumption.
- Premises to consume alcohol were mainly concentrated in the city centre, whilst off-sale premises were more dispersed across the city. The Chair requested information on the UK city with the highest concentration be provided.
- There had been a change in the patterns of drinking in the UK with more people drinking at home, driven in part by the increased affordability of alcohol particularly in the off-sale trade.

It was explained that health was not a licensing objective, but it was noted

there were health aspects for other licensing objectives, for example, violent crime, impact on the community, mental health and wellbeing, and public safety. The Director of Public Health also wanted a public health statement included in the authority's licensing statement as there had been in other parts of the country, to show the authority recognised that alcohol had an impact on the community and families. It was noted the rate of alcohol consumption was linked to availability and affordability, and it was important to control its cumulative impact to maintain health and wellbeing.

It was reported that some areas of the country had discouraged vertical drinking establishments, as people tended to drink more and more quickly when standing up compared to sitting down. The Licensing Committee, through the licensing statement could also encourage local businesses to provide premises which were welcoming to people who did not drink alcohol and encourage licensees to provide a wider range of non-alcoholic adult drinks. In Nottingham there is an alcohol-free bar (Café Sobar) which specifically catered for people who do not drink alcohol.

It was stated that when licensing laws relaxed, the expectation was the country would automatically move into a continental café culture, but with the role of advertising and product placement, alcohol had become normalised in society. In terms of health harm, it affected the older population. Younger people tended to binge drink and there was more violence in that group.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and agreed that Public Health work with the Authority Team on the licensing statement.

RESOLVED:

that:

1. Members note the presentation and information received.
2. Information on the city with the highest concentration of off-sales be provided to the Chair.
3. Public Health work with the Authority on the Licensing Statement.

38. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business raised.

39. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.42pm.