



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Held: TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

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

Councillor Gee
Councillor Whittle

Councillor Westley
Councillor Nangreave

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18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Byrne, Cank, Fonseca and Shelton.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

21. PETITIONS

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

22. 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.

23. TAXI DRIVER KNOWLEDGE TEST

The Licensing Team Manger introduced the report and provided an overview of the contents of the report.

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

- That elements of the practical driving test could be outsourced and that the Knowledge Test had moved on to be based on more local knowledge and was set out in a similar way to the Driving Standards Theory Test
- Training providers who provide safeguarding training were similar to those who deliver the Speed Awareness Course

In further discussions it was noted that the Licensing Team Manager had visited the Wolverhampton City Council training day which was delivered through external providers and covered the safeguarding element. There was no knowledge test although, participants were required to pass mandatory questions.

Furthermore, it was noted that although this was brought to the previous Committee meeting, since then the service wanted to encompass more aspects, such as safeguarding before they are on the job and that a service provider had become available with procurement details in progress. This provider would allow the Licensing Team to set the questions and with the possibility to use the Central Library Training Room to deliver training sessions was deemed a more efficient manner. Members of the Committee agreed that this would be feasible and an effective use of resources.

It was also noted that during the process taxi drivers and taxi business had been consulted and in which both agreed this was required and that the test should be reasonable and realistic.

The Chief Licensing Officer noted that, this was a long time coming and that the product being considered was not available in the market previously with no suitable alternative. The process that was used currently was labour intensive, allowing for 8 tests daily and this new system would be a more suitable and efficient system to that which was proposed 12 months ago, allowing for 12 tests daily on device provided by the team. The cost of the system would not come to the Council as the training is paid for by applicants.

Members of the Committee suggested that it would be beneficial to include Members in the development process as they had local knowledge to input that could prevent drivers being a nuisance on the road and Members were supportive of test running the system.

Members of the Committee also suggested that the new test system should be added to the penalty system, which would mean that drivers would require to redo the test rather than paying a fine as a sanction.

RESOLVED:

- 1) Members of the Committee welcome the report, and
- 2) That the Licensing Team be requested to consult with the Members of the Committee in the preparation of the training system.

24. TAXI LICENSING - VEHICLE CONDITION OF FITNESS

The Chief Licensing Officer introduced the report and outlined the standard conditions of the vehicle and how the advisory and mandatory conditions should meet the requirements. It was noted that the conditions of fitness were to ensure vehicles were safe and comfortable for the residents of the city.

It was further noted that the Licensing Team did not want to lower their standards and that the conditions were monitored at the testing stations and that some conditions could lead to points as a sanction for the driver.

As part of the discussions, Members of the Committee were happy for Officers to make the decisions. Some Members of the Committee suggested that CCTV in the vehicles should be prioritised and mandatory as part of the conditions. The Chair welcomed further discussions around CCTV in vehicles.

As part of the discussions around CCTV in the vehicles, The Legal Officer to the Committee noted that, there was government guidance available, and Members needed to consider the option to make this a mandatory condition as the licensing authority would be the owner of the data collected but noted that CCTV in vehicles was currently voluntary and there was a policy in place regulated by ICO.

Members of the Committee suggested that CCTV in vehicles in other authorities were proving to be beneficial, as it was a way of protecting the drivers and the service users. Additionally, it was noted Suggested that CCTV systems could be monitored and recorded on a database at the stations during the biannual MOT's. In response to the Members suggestion, the Legal Officer further drew members attention to the policy in place which brings order to the approach of voluntary CCTV systems and suggested this was a good start.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Licensing and Public Safety Committee approve changes to the conditions, and
- 2) That the report be noted.

25. TAXI LICENSING - DRIVER RENEWALS

The Chief Licensing Officer introduced the report and gave the Committee an overview of the report. It was noted that late renewal figures were generally low and the new system had had positive impact on drivers who were no longer leaving things late.

As part of the discussions Members of the Committee were happy and

supported the changes. In response to queries raised about DBS checks, it was noted that this was mandatory and that this was done every 6 months and could potentially be done automatically in the future, which would also speed up the enforcement process.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Members of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee approve the changes, and
- 2) That the report be noted.

26. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of urgent business.

27. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.07 pm