

# LICENSING COMMITTEE



**WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2021 - 10.00 AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Humphrey (Chairman), Councillor R Skoulding (Vice-Chairman), Councillor D Connor, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor A Maul, Councillor Mrs K Mayor and Councillor N Meekins

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor W Rackley and Councillor S Wilkes

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Michelle Bishop (Licensing Manager), Dan Horn (Head of Housing and Community Support) and Colin Miles (Legal Representative)

## **LIC8/20      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 3 December 2020 were approved.

## **LIC9/20      REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY 2021-2026**

Members considered the Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021-2026 report presented by Michelle Bishop.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Hoy felt that the policy change requesting a vehicle be searched diligently for left property every time a passenger leaves a vehicle seems too strict. The word 'diligently' is open to interpretation and she would not want a driver to gain penalty points if a passenger complained the vehicle had not been searched thoroughly enough and is concerned it could potentially be abused.
- Michelle Bishop said the original policy requested periodic vehicle searches, but it was changed due to comment received from the trade asking for more definition. Currently a vehicle must be cleaned down after every passenger exit so it highlights that it would also be opportune to check for left property at the same time. It would also help pinpoint which passenger left the item behind. However, she could not see a driver receiving penalty points for not checking the vehicle on every occasion but would amend the policy if required. Councillor Hoy thanked Michelle Bishop for the explanation and said she was reassured that drivers would not be penalised in this instance and was therefore satisfied with the change as it stands.
- Councillor Hoy added that she was pleased about the removal of the recommendation of an age limit on vehicles as she had been approached by drivers who had been concerned about this. Just because a vehicle is old does not mean it is in poor condition; not everyone has the finances to replace their vehicles regularly but if they are maintained and serviced then there is no reason to replace them. She said it is good to know that when people make representations they are listened to and thanked Michelle Bishop for this.
- Councillor Humphrey referenced Councillor Hoy's earlier concern about the use of the word 'diligently' and stated that the word was in the original policy. He clarified that definition had been requested on the term 'periodically', which had been taken out and replaced with 'after each passenger leaves the vehicle'.
- Councillor Maul agreed with Councillor Hoy and is pleased that we are taking note of what

the service users have suggested. Like every other trade, it has been tough on drivers. A common sense approach needs to be taken. He also mentioned that point 2.6 of the report mentions idling. In cold weather, a vehicle will need to be kept running to keep it warm for the next passenger. He would therefore hope yet again that a common sense approach be taken by officers to take into account the circumstances in which a vehicle may be idling.

- Michelle Bishop thanked Councillor Maul and agreed a sensible approach was required, saying that all we are trying to do is look at the environment. We have received reports of idling outside schools, so it is to raise awareness and highlight that it is an issue and inappropriate in certain areas and circumstances.
- Councillor Connor commented that it is a good and thorough report.
- Councillor Skoulding agreed saying it is a fair report and the officers had done well.
- Councillor Lynn said officers had worked very hard on this and come up with a report that is feasible and reasonable and will be of benefit to the taxi drivers.
- Councillor Humphrey stated that he echoed these positive comments.

**Members considered the consultation feedback received regarding the draft policy document for Hackney Carriage & Private Hire licensing and AGREED a final version and to recommend to Full Council that the draft Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy be approved for the period of 2021 - 2026.**

10.16 am

Chairman