

Minutes of a meeting of the
Worthing Licensing & Control Committee A
24 January 2022
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Steve Wills (Chair)
Councillor Charles James (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mike Barrett	Councillor Sean McDonald
Councillor Ferdousi Henna Chowdhury	Councillor Richard Mulholland
Councillor Dan Coxhill	Councillor Richard Nowak
Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies	Councillor Hazel Thorpe
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor John Turley
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Rosey Whorlow

Absent

Councillor Nicola Waight

LCCAB/10/21-22 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

There were declarations of interest or substitute members

LCCAB/11/21-22 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the Licensing and Control Committee A meeting held on the 27 September 2021, the Licensing and Control Committee B meeting held on the 7 October 2021 and the Licensing and Control Committee B sub-Committee meetings of the 7 July 2021, 15 September 2021 and the 18 October 2021 be approved as the correct record.

LCCAB/12/21-22 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

LCCAB/13/21-22 Review of Taxi & Private Hire Handbook

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities, a copy of which had been circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 4. The report invited members to review the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Handbook following a wide consultation exercise. Members were requested to consider the document and the representations received and any other appropriate amendments.

The Licensing Officer presented the report to the Committee and went through responses received as a result of consultation on the issue.

Members were told of representations in relation to the tint levels of rear side windows. Members discussed a condition concerning the restriction of vehicles with a certain level

of tint in rear windows. Evidence was put forward concerning both the levels of standard tint from main vehicle manufacturers and submissions from Sussex Police stating that passengers in the rear seats should be visible when looked upon from outside. Representations from the trade stated that the condition reduced the amount of vehicles available for purchase for use and that the cost of replacing windows was prohibitively expensive. During debate members learned that Brighton and Hove and Arun did not have conditions relating to the tint of rear windows and that Adur had removed such conditions from its handbook in the previous week. Five vehicles in the previous 3 years had been rejected on the grounds of windows with too heavy a tint. Members discussed the matter. Members discussed the matter and there it was recognised that there was an overall difficult economic situation and that it was favourable to have a consistent standard across neighbouring authorities. The Committee was minded to remove the condition, however it was considered that privacy glass should be prohibited and it was agreed by vote that the policy be changed so that there be at least 30% light transmission in the windows concerned.

Members discussed representation in relation to the operation of CCTV in vehicles. The Committee was told that in relation to CCTV police and the local authority had on more than one occasion been unable to obtain CCTV information due to footage being partially lost, corrupted and or equipment tampered with, fuses removed or cables disconnected. It was proffered that the installation of a screen that installed in vehicles would enable drivers and passenger to know instantly that the CCTV was recording and functioning. Members were told that those vehicles without a screen could have one retrofit for £66 or if rented there would be a cost of £2.46 to the driver. Members debated the CCTV issue and there was support for the compulsory installation of a CCTV screen. They were told that 32% of data requested by police and the local authority had been corrupted due to a variety of reasons. Given public safety concerns in relation to the operation of installed CCTV and the benefit to falsely accused drivers, members agreed to add a condition that the CCTV Screens be made compulsory and that the fitting be carries out within 6 months.

Members discussed a representation that claimed that the knowledge test was too complex and that PDA systems and google maps showed routes. Members were told that the knowledge test was also for safeguarding, disability and equalities, customer service, places of interest, highway code, road signs, English and maths. The knowledge test also provided assurance that drivers with local knowledge on the most efficient routes to take at the various times of day. Members considered that matter and agreed that current policies concerning testing were robust and that no changes were necessary.

Members discussed a representation that asked for the allowance of smaller vehicles and two passenger vehicles on the basis that they were cheaper to buy, maintain were more ecologically friendly. Members were told that the size of the vehicle was important to passenger comfort and safety. If an application was submitted for a vehicle with less than the standard number of four seats then it would be considered. Given the submission from officers members agreed that the current policy was sufficient and not in need of change.

The licensing officer introduced a representation which had asked for the implementation of an intended use policy. Members were told that an intended use policy did not allow hackney carriages to predominately work outside of its licenced area. Members were told that pertinent questions were asked as part of an application process there was legislation in this regard but introduction of such a policy would codify things locally. The

inclusion of an intended use policy would require further consultation from the trade. /members agreed that an intended use policy by put out to consultation with the trade.

Members discussed a representation in relation to the amount of wheelchair accessible vehicles available. Members were told that policies had been amended to address the decline in wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages. All saloon type hackney carriages would need to be wheelchair accessible if ownership was transferred at the next licence renewal. It was proffered that the only way to increase wheelchair accessible vehicles in private hire was to add a condition that operators need to have a percentage of their fleet as wheelchair accessible Members agreed that the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles was important and approved a consultation with private hire operators on a potential addition to conditions placing an obligation to have at least 10% percentage of their fleet as wheelchair accessible. Further points within the representation were considered and it was agreed that consultation be carried out on the following: all communications on or within the vehicle should be accessible to people with sight loss, that the vehicle plate number be in a large heavily contrasted print on the rear doors and the back of the seats.

Members discussed a representation from Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and were satisfied that representations made were already covered in the handbook or had been discussed previously in the meeting.

Members discussed a representation from Sompting Parish Council on a number of matters including DBS checks for booking staff. Upon investigation it was determined that the matters set out in the representation had already been covered in the handbook.

Members discussed a representation submitted via the Council's Insight team on the age of hackney carriage vehicles and were told that vehicles older than 10 years in immaculate condition were considered for licence. Members agreed that no changes to the current handbook were necessary in this regard but welcomed the representation

Changes coming from statutory guidance and highlighted in the report at paragraphs 4.45 to 4.48 were debated and the committee agreed to add these matters into the handbook

Resolved

- i) That the handbook be approved as amended,
- ii) That additional consultation be carried out where necessary and indicated above

LCCAB/14/21-22 Licensing Act 2005 - Statement of Licensing Gambling Act Policy

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities, copies of which had been circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 5. Members were invited to review the draft statement of licensing Policy and invite Council to adopt the updated policy.

The Licensing officer introduced the report to the committee, summarising proposed changes and representations received. Members were also given an overview of the changing situation regarding gambling with an increase of online gambling and a

decrease in traditional betting shops, particularly with regards to legislation concerning fixed odds betting terminals.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed to recommend the policy to full council for adoption

Resolved: that the committee recommend the draft statement of licensing policy for adoption by Full Council.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm