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REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15 September 2021

Present: Councillor A Hodson (Chair)

Councillors C Jones C Spriggs
D Mitchell I Williams
J Bird KJ Williams
D Burgess-Joyce S Williams
M Collins A Wright
D M Kenny M Booth
C O'Hagan

Apologies Councillors E Gleaves

5 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in connection with any item on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

6 MINUTES

Members were reminded of the resolution made at full Council on 6 September 2021 (minute 26a refers) which stated that the terms of reference of the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee be amended so as to provide that the sub-committees forming Licensing Panels (Regulatory) will be:

- (a) exempt from political balance requirements; but
- (b) not formed solely by members of one Group,

Resolved –

- (1) That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 be approved.
- (2) That the resolution made at the Council meeting held on 6 September 2021, as outlined above, be noted.

7 MINUTES OF THE REGULATORY PANEL

Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Regulatory Panel held on 11 June, 30 June, 9 July and 13 August 2021 be approved.

8 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY

The Director of Law and Governance submitted a report for the Committee to adopt a single cohesive Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The Licensing Manager reported that the term taxi was used in the report to refer to hackney carriages which could be hired immediately by hailing on the street or at a rank and that private hire vehicles must be pre booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator.

Members of the Committee were advised that it was a recommendation of the Department for Transport's Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards that all Licensing Authorities bring together all their policies on taxi and private hire licensing into one cohesive policy document and that this document be made publicly available. This should include, but not be limited to, policies on convictions, a fit and proper persons text, licence conditions and vehicle standards.

It was reported that on 23 March 2021 a report had been presented to this Committee which provided details of the full recommendations set out within the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards document and sought approval of proposed actions in response to the recommendations. It had been resolved at that meeting that there should be a single and cohesive taxi and private hire licensing policy document.

The Licensing Manager reported that she had subsequently brought together the separate policies, criteria and conditions relating to taxi and private hire licensing into one policy document which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. A list of the existing separate policies, criteria and conditions relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing was attached at Appendix 3 of the report. The effect of the policy document attached at Appendix 1 of the report was to consolidate existing policy, criteria and conditions and it had not introduced any new requirements for the hackney carriage or private hire trade.

Councillor J Bird raised concerns in respect of the environmental impact in respect of harmful emissions from licensed vehicles and requested that the use of ultra low emission vehicles as licensed vehicles be investigated. Further to discussions by Members, the Chair made reference to the need to be sympathetic to environmental issues but also that consideration be given in respect of the livelihoods of taxi drivers and residents' accessibility to

transport and stressed the need for a pragmatic view on how this could be tackled.

The Licensing Manager advised that this work would be undertaken.

Councillor S Williams referred to paragraph 10.3 of the policy relating to the relevance of convictions when considering applications for hackney carriage and private hire licences and highlighted that this did not include any reference to a caution being issued in respect of a drug related offence.

The Licensing Manager advised that this would be reviewed.

Mr D Cummins, Unite the Union addressed the Committee in respect of the reference to a mandatory requirement for drivers to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Update Service set out within the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards. Mr Cummins was advised that this was not a matter under consideration at this meeting and that the Committee were not being asked to amend any current policies.

Mr Beck, proprietor of RB Travel and wished to address the Committee in respect of any policy change relating to the use of 'green' vehicles. It was reiterated that the matter for Members' consideration at this meeting was to adopt the single cohesive Policy and that no new requirements in respect of hackney carriage or private hire licences were being asked to be considered at this meeting.

On a motion by the Chair and seconded by Councillor C Jones it was -

Resolved – That the single cohesive Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report be adopted.

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