

## **REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on Wednesday 9 October 2024 in the Council Chamber. Town Hall Heath Road Runcorn commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: Wallace (Chairman), Abbott, Bramwell, Dourley Fry, V. Hill, K.Loftus, and Teeling.

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Hughes and A McInerney

Absence declared on Council Business:

Officers present: Alex Strickland (Legal Advisor), Kim Hesketh (Licensing Manager), and Wendy Pringle (Enforcement Officer)

## **REG MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2024 were taken as read and will be signed as a correct record.

## **REG TAXI LICENSING MATTERS**

The Committee considered four matters, the first was to consider amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy.

The request was on the following points.

- Age of vehicles
- Card readers
- Colour of purpose-built vehicles
- Space wheel/space saver
- Fire extinguisher
- Age of electric vehicle

### **1. Age of Vehicles**

The Committee considered a report which outlined a request from the Taxi Trade to review the vehicle age policy due to the cost of replacing vehicles. There were 111 replies to the consultation, 52 replies were in favour of the change, 52 replies are not in favour of the change and 7 replies made no comment.

The Committee considered the report and the outcome of the consultation.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should remove the minimum age requirement from 5 years to 7 years for a standard vehicle and maximum from 10 to 12 years and keep the standard vehicle and maximum age of 13 years for wheelchair accessible but increase the maximum to 18. With the same testing conditions as two per year.

## 2. Card Readers

The Committee considered a report which outlines a request from one of the Private Hire Operators that this should be reviewed by the Licensing Department. There were 111 replies to the consultation 26 replies where in favours of the change, 80 replies are not in favour of the change and 5 replies made no comment.

The committee considered the report and the outcome of the consultation.

### **RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should not require a card reader.

## 3. Colour of purpose-built vehicles

The Committee considered a report which outlined a request from the Taxi Trade that purpose built vehicles (Fully Accessible Vehicles) for Hackney Carriage Vehicles should be any colour due to the cost of replacing them. There were 111 replies to the consultation 23 replies where in favour of the change, 27 replies where not in favour of the change and 61 replies made no comment.

The Committee considered the report and the outcome of the consultation.

### **RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should maintain the current policy.

## 4. Spare Wheel/Space Saver

The Committee considered a report which outlined a request from the Taxi Trade to remove the condition for a spare wheel/space save. The request was made due to purchasing new vehicles, manufacturers do not provide a spare wheel or space saver they now only provide the manufacturer tyre kit. There were 111 replies to the consultation 78 replies where in favour of the change, 18 replies where not in favour of the change and 15 replies made no comment.

### **RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should remove the current policy requirements for a space saver/spare wheel in the vehicle (with the implications that the manufacturers specifications applies).

## 5. Fire Extinguishers

The Committee considers a report which outlined a request from the Taxi Trade to remove this condition due to not being required any longer. There were 111 replies to the consultation 30 replies where in favour of the change, 21 replies where not in favour of the change and 60 replies made no comment.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should keep the requirement for a fire extinguisher in the vehicle as per current policy.

6. Age of Electric Vehicles

The Committee considered a report which outlined a request from the Taxi Trade to review the vehicle age policy for Electric Vehicles due to the financial cost. There were 111 replied to the consultation, 30 replies were in favour of the change, 8 replies were not in favour of the change and 73 replies made no comment.

The Committee considered the report and the outcome of the consultation.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Council should maintain the current policy with no difference between licensing convectional and electric vehicles.

**2. GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY**

The Committee considered a request to approve a Draft Statement of Gambling Policy for recommendation to the Council for adoption. The Committee was advised that one reply was received following the consultation process.

Following the comments received during the consultation exercise, Halton Borough Council will publish on the Councils website the details of the National Gambling Helpline for information.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

**An appropriate form of wording for the Council resolution would be: "The Council":**

- (1) Adopts the Statement of Gambling Policy attached to the report to come into effect immediately following the expiry of the current Policy; and**
- (2) directs that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services publishes the Statement in accordance with section 349 Gambling Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006".**

**3. Taxi Enforcement Policy**

The Committee considered a report to accept powers delegated from the City of Wolverhampton Council to Halton Borough Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Since the introduction of the Deregulation Act 2015, Private Hire Operators have been allowed to subcontract bookings to any other Private Hire Operator. This has resulted in an increase of vehicles completing bookings in one local authority area although the driver and vehicles are licensed in a different local authority area.

The City of Wolverhampton have recently piloted a scheme with Milton Keynes Borough Council for a period of 6 months. This scheme has been successful and has now been offered to other Local Authorities one of them being Halton Borough Council.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

1. The Committee approved the proposed formal arrangements between the City of Wolverhampton Council and Halton Borough Council in relation to officer authorisation concerning Taxi and Private Hire licensing functions and accept the powers delegated by the City of Wolverhampton Council under Section 101 Local Government Act 1972.

**4. TAXI LICENSING UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report summarising the decisions taken by the Taxi Licensing Sub Committee, Regulatory Sub Committee and the urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive under delegated powers.

**RESOLVED: that:-**

1. That the contents of the report be noted,

Meeting ended: 19.35