

- Minutes of** **Licensing and Public Safety Committee**
- Meeting date** **Tuesday, 7 December 2021**
- Members present:** Councillors James Flannery (Chair), Jacky Alty, Derek Forrest, Keith Martin, Peter Mullineaux, Alan Ogilvie and John Rainsbury
- Officers:** Alex Jackson (Shared Legal Services Team Leader), Chris Ward (Interim Licensing Team Leader), Stephanie Newby (Licensing Officer), Justin Abbotts (Licensing Officer) and Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
- Other members:**
- Public:** 0
- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- Apologies were received from Councillors Jane Bell, Renee Blow and Julie Buttery. Councillor Jacqui Mort attended virtually using Microsoft Teams. Councillor Colin Sharples and Gareth Watson attended the meeting as substitutes.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- There were no declarations.
- 3 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 June 2021 of Licensing and Public Safety Committee**
- Resolved:** (Unanimously)
- The minutes of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee held Tuesday, 8 June 2021 be agreed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.
- 4 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 9 November 2021 of General Licensing Sub-Committee Panel**
- Resolved:** (Unanimously)
- The minutes of the General Licensing Sub-Committee held Tuesday, 9 November 2021 be agreed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.
- 5 Gambling Policy**
- The Committee considered a report of the Director of Planning and Development that proposed required revisions to the Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy

(Gambling) and sought approval for the revised policy to be submitted to full Council for ratification.

The Licensing Officer presented the report and explained that the Council are required by Section 349 of the Licensing Act 2003 to publish a new Licensing Policy (Gambling) by 31 January 2022 when the current policy would expire. Two amendments had been made to the policy namely, the increase in population for South Ribble to 111,086 and an amendment to the local area profile.

As the amendments to the policy were only minor in nature the Licensing Officer explained that members were requested to bypass the consultation process and recommend the report to full council for approval.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. The committee considered all revisions and recommend the report for approval to full council before 31 January 2022.

6 Single Use/Restricted Private Hire Licences

The Interim Licensing Team Leader presented a report of the Director of Planning and Development which sought to inform members about the recent request from South Ribble licenced operators for a single use/ restricted Private Hire (PVH) licence.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that he had been contacted by several operators who had requested aspects of the licence such as the local knowledge test, be removed as they were struggling to employ PVH drivers due to the requirements for the licence. The requests had been received from operators who solely perform school contract work outside of the borough or worked predominantly outside of the borough, for example airport collection and drop offs.

A representative from 24/7 Ltd addressed the committee and explained that they had been struggling to employ drivers since they started in Lancashire in March 2020 due to the local area knowledge tests in place. The representative explained that the business was based within South Ribble and they would like to keep the business within the borough. It was provided that a lot of the school work was contracted through Lancashire County Council (LCC) and drivers were mainly collecting children to take them out of the borough to their school.

The representative explained to committee that they had requested a single use licence and asked for the local area knowledge test to be removed. They were struggling to employ drivers to do this work. The representative advised that they only undertook school contract work, with drivers working 190 days a year doing pre-contracted school or respite work.

Another operator addressed the committee and stated that he had operated his business for 17 years and only undertook airport transfers. They had been advertising for drivers since July and had not been able to employ a single driver due to the requirements in place for obtaining a PVH licence. The operator explained that drivers had to undertake numerous tests in order to be a granted yet many other trades did not. He explained that he had applied to renew his licence in July and had received his clear police check in October, he then undertook the Child Exploitation

(CSE) test at the council in October and was told he would get the result of his test. The operator advised that he had still not received his result from the council, he went on to explain that if nothing changed his business would be forced to cease trading.

In response to a member enquiry, the Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that additional signage could be implemented should the single use licence be accepted, ensuring that members of the public would be able to distinguish the difference between a PVH and a restricted PVH.

Members requested further details on the pass rate for the local area knowledge test. The Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that he would provide this outside of the meeting. Members accepted that there was a national shortage of drivers and discussed the use of technology, how this could assist drivers and the drawbacks should the technology fail

Members considered the three options within the report and agreed to start consultation for all with signage for restricted use licences being included.

Resolved: (By Majority)

For: Councillors Flannery, Alty, Forrest, Martin, Mullineaux, Sharples and Watson

Abstain: Councillor Ogilvie

1. That the report be noted.
2. Committee considered the proposed request for a single use/restricted private hire licence.
3. Committee agree that the licensing section undertake a consultation exercise with stakeholders on the proposed changes to the Taxi Licensing Policy.
4. The committee agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation exercise at a future meeting.

7 Consultation Feedback Report - DFT Statutory Standards

The committee considered a report of the Director of Planning and Development that sought to provide feedback on the consultation carried out in response to the intended amendments on the Taxi Licensing Policy.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader advised members although the policy was broadly compliant, some amendments were necessary in order for the policy to comply with the implied Statutory Standards DFT. Following consultation, only one response had been received and was all in favour of the changes.

CCTV had been omitted from the policy and would be reconsidered at a later date as it did not need to be addressed as part of the DFT changes. The Interim Licensing Team Leader advised that training would be provided to members of the committee in the next twelve months and would take into consideration the implications of GDPR.

In response to a member enquiry, it was confirmed that no suitable alternative CSE training had been found by officers and that neighbouring authority, Chorley Borough Council were also looking for a new package. Training had been found online but this was two hours long and for teachers and was not a suitable replacement.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader stated that he would amend the heading for the Expedited Process to ensure no confusion as to the process.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. The committee considered the report and recommended the proposed policy changes be referred for decision by full council.

8 Vehicle Age Policy

The committee considered a report of the Director of Planning and Development that requested members to consider amending the existing vehicle age policy.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that the current policy allowed wheel chair accessible vehicles (WAV) to be allowed onto the fleet until they are six years of age with other vehicles being permitted up to four years of age. WAV are permitted to remain on the fleet until twelve years of age whilst all other vehicles must come off the fleet at eight years of age.

Since 2015 the council only licenced new Hackney Carriages which are WAV, licences issued on or before 21 October 2014 may replace their vehicle with either a WAV or non-WAV. Currently there are 105 licenced hackney carriages with 61 licenced by a single operator, 44 are with owners or other operators, 14 not linked to any operator and 24 are WAV. The Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that the council would still need to consider if it had a balance of vehicles to comply with its equality duty.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader explained that the currently policy offers no incentive for drivers who wish to choose more efficient and less polluting vehicles. Any change in vehicle age policy should have regard for the existing euro ratings which since 2016 has required manufacturers to reduce emissions.

The Interim Licensing Team Leader advised that Option 4 – Reduce all vehicles to 4 and 8 years, with the option of an extension for non-polluting vehicles that conform to a certain euro rating was the preferred option of Officers. This would also provide incentive to the trade to purchase more efficient and less polluting vehicles.

Members considered all four options within the report and stated the need for the policy to be flexible. Members thanked officers for a comprehensive report.

The Chair thanked all members and officers for their time and efforts this year.

The Chair also thanked the members of the public who attended the meeting and made contributions.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. The committee considered the evidence submitted within the report.
2. The committee agree that the licensing section undertake a period of consultation, for all options within the report, with the relevant stakeholders in respect of the proposed options.
3. The committee agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation exercise at a future meeting.
4. The committee considered what effect changing the vehicle age policy would have on the council's air quality commitments.

Chair

Date