

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Licensing and Safety Committee**  
**Tuesday, 15 December 2020**  
**6.00pm to 6.30pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

**Present:** Councillors: Browne, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers (Chairman), Fearn (Vice-Chairman), Hackwell, McDonald, Prenter and Mrs Elizabeth Turpin

**In Attendance:** Laura Caiels, Principal Lawyer - Place Team  
Mandy Francis, Licensing Manager  
Mark Lees, Regulatory Services Manager, Gravesham Borough Council, Gravesham and Medway Shared Licensing Service  
Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

**552 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adeoye, Bhutia, Kemp and Mahil.

(During this period, the Conservative and Labour and Co-operative political groups had informally agreed, due the Coronavirus pandemic, to run meetings with reduced number of participants. This was to reduce risk, comply with Government guidance and enable more efficient meetings. Therefore, the apologies given reflected that informal agreement of reduced participants.)

**553 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 10 June 2020 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**554 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**555 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

## Licensing and Safety Committee, 15 December 2020

### Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

### Other interests

There were none.

## **556 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy 2021-2026**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report on the draft revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021-2026 and the proposed consultation methodology. It was proposed that the draft policy be the subject of a four week consultation exercise, the results of which would be considered by the Licensing and Safety Committee before the final draft policy was presented to Full Council for approval on 22 April 2021.

The Licensing Manager outlined the proposed revisions to the policy, as outlined in Appendix B to the report, which reflected the Government's Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle standards issued in July 2020 under the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

Clarification was sought on when drivers would be required to complete on-line mandatory disability awareness training as this would be at their own cost at a time when they were facing difficulties due to Covid-19. Members were advised that all new applicants would be required to undertake the training on application and existing drivers would have until September 2021.

A Member expressed concern that all new Hackney Carriage vehicles, which would be required to be wheelchair accessible, would be licenced for 10 years rather than the current seven years. The Licensing Manager advised that there were currently many vehicles that were licenced beyond 10 years due to their exceptional condition. Regarding the cost of wheelchair accessible vehicles, she advised that converted vehicles may be a more cost-effective option.

A Member sought confirmation that there was a Taxi Rank in Parkwood, as referred to in the Policy, and the Licensing Manager undertook to check the accuracy of this.

Referring to the eligibility criteria and application requirements, a Member sought clarification on what constituted an acceptable driving history. The Licensing Manager advised that, in making an assessment, Licensing Officers would refer to the Council's Convictions Policy. With regard to how applicants' proficiency in the English language was assessed, this would be observed during the application process, particularly when applicants took the on-line Knowledge Test which could not be taken in other languages.

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A Member expressed concern that darker tinted windows might cause safety issues and was advised that privacy glass would not be allowed, only tinted glass that was fitted as part of the manufacturing process.

The Licensing Manager requested that Members submit all their comments in response to the consultation.

A number of Members expressed concern that beginning the consultation period on the revised draft policy before Christmas would adversely affect the response rate and suggest this be delayed until the New Year.

The revisions to the policy were generally welcomed as they sought to make Medway's taxis more accessible and safer for passengers.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy 2021-2026 for consultation and the proposed method of consultation, subject to the commencement date of the consultation being postponed until early January 2021.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer**

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