

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2019

Present: Councillor Mrs Hinder (Chairman), and
Councillors Garten, Harvey, Hinder, Mrs Hinder, Joy,
McLoughlin, Purle, Mrs Robertson, J Sams and
Springett and Mrs Wilson

48. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Grigg.

49. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Wilson was substituting for Councillor Mrs Grigg.

50. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

51. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

52. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

Councillors Garten, Purle, Mrs Joy, McLoughlin, Mrs Robertson, Mrs Springett and Mrs Sams stated that they had been lobbied in relation to Agenda Item 8 – Low Emission Standards for Hackney and Private Hire Vehicles.

53. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public.

54. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2018**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

55. **LOW EMISSION STANDARDS FOR HACKNEY AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

The Committee considered the report of Mr John Littlemore, the Head of Housing and Community Services in which he advised that at the last meeting the Committee had agreed to defer implementation of the Emissions Standards Policy for hackney and private hire vehicles to enable focus groups to take place with trade members.

It was noted that two meetings were held and well attended and it had been clear that the consultation process had been misunderstood as were the implications of specific parts of the policy. This had been distilled

down to an issue with the rate at which existing licenced Hackney vehicles would have to be replaced with either hybrid or fully electric vehicles.

Mr Neil Cox, the Hackney Carriage trade representative gave a statement to the Committee and commented as follows:-

- The trade request that the current policy of 15 years maximum licensed vehicle life should remain, particularly for existing licensees.
- Concern that existing vehicles would need to be replaced by 1 January 2025.
- That technology was moving forward but there was still not the infrastructure in place for enough charging points.
- That Item 9 on the agenda should not become part of the taxi policy at this point.

In response to questions from Members, Officers responded that:-

- The Policy would relate to all private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. However, private hire vehicles can currently only be licensed up to six years old.
- Officers are proposing to re-run the public consultation for a further 4 weeks borough wide to clarify parts of the draft Emission Standards and Suitability for Use of Maidstone Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles with trade members and public. A report would then be brought back to the Committee at its first meeting in June and then sent onto the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee for approval of the policy.
- That the consultation could include a question to the public and hackney carriage proprietor who are renewing vehicle licences in the 2nd and 3rd phases asking for comment on possible fitting of parking heaters to vehicles in order that vehicles are not kept running in the High Street.

RESOLVED: That

1. The decision on the draft Emission Standard Policy be deferred to enable a further 4 week consultation period on the timing of implementation as it relates to existing licensed vehicles after the research is carried out on parking heaters to allow formulation of an appropriate question on that.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing and Community Services to consult with the public and proprietors of hackney carriage vehicles on the issue of fitting parking heaters to vehicles, subject to them renewing during phases 2 and 3.

Voting: Unanimous

56. AMENDMENTS TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY

Mrs Lorraine Neale, the Senior Licensing Officer presented her report on the proposed public consultation on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy which would run for 6 weeks.

Mrs Neale highlighted the changes made to procedures and processes since the Policy was first published.

In response to questions from Members, Officers responded that:-

- Taxi Operators must either have their premises or home address in the borough.
- The Council would not grant a licence to an operator whose premises are located outside the borough of Maidstone unless they had renewed prior to the adoption of the policy under 'grandfather rights' provided that the conditions of the licence are fully met and the licence is not allowed to lapse.
- That the driving assessment test replaced the DSA practical taxi test and wheelchair test or the KCC transport test and has been developed for Maidstone specifically.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Committee agree a 6 week consultation on amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy which came into effect on 8th December 2015.
2. The draft amended policy along with the results and feedback from the 6 week consultation be reported to the Committee at its June meeting.
3. The Head of Housing and Community Services make amendments agreed at this Committee in respect of the driving assessment being Maidstone approved and amending the paragraph on page 77 to make it clear that a spare tyre is not mandatory and that delegated authority be given to make any minor amendments to the Policy in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Voting: Unanimous

57. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.