

**Minutes of the Licensing Committee
4 December 2024**

Present:

Councillor S.A. Dunn (Chair)
Councillor M.J. Lee (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson

K.M. Grant

B. Weerasinghe

Apologies: Councillors M. Arnold, S. Bhadye, T. Burrell, R. Chandler, D.C. Clarke and J.T.F. Doran

17/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

18/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

19/24 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2024-2029

The Committee considered a report on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy 2024-2029 following consultation. The Principal Licensing Officer outlined the changes to the policy and advised that there had been seven comments received.

The Committee queried whether there were many Taxi's operating in Spelthorne that were near the ten year age limit. The Principal Licensing Officer advised that while there were some, renewal of licenses for those vehicles was done on a case-by-case basis and depended on how well maintained the vehicle was. In certain cases licenses for older vehicles may only be renewed for six months.

The Committee asked whether there was a plan in place to enable drivers to charge electric vehicles at taxi ranks. The Sustainability and Flood Risk Officer advised that it was being considered as part of the Council's Infrastructure Strategy.

The Committee requested clarification on the dates by which only electric vehicles would be given new licenses and were advised that it would be for any new licenses from 01 October 2028. A petrol or diesel vehicle applying for a license on 30 September 2028 would be able to be used up until 2043.

The Committee asked about the removal of the tinted glass requirement and queried if a driver wanted to use tinted glass whether it would be allowed. The Principal Licensing Officer advised that it would only be allowed if it was factory fitted glass.

Councillor Weerasinghe arrived at 19:22 and was not permitted to vote on this item.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. approve the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy 2024-2029 following consultation
2. recommend to Council for the scheme of delegations to include the Chair of Licensing with the Senior Environmental Health Manager to make minor amendments to the policy.

20/24 Setting of Fees & Charges for the licensing of Hackney Carriages, Private Hire, and Private Hire Operators 2025-2026

The Committee considered a report on the setting of Fees & Charges for Hackney Carriages, Private Hire, and Private Hire Operators. The Principal Licensing Officer set out the responses to the consultation and advised that fares would be reviewed in Spring 2025. The Committee were advised that fees were set at a level which enabled full recover of the cost of running the service.

The Committee queried whether drivers were aware that if they subscribed to the DBS Update Service the yearly cost of DBS checks was reduced. The Principal Licensing Officer advised that drivers are told but it is their choice as to whether they pursued that option.

The Committee queried the increase in fees and why it was not in line with increases seen in other Committees and were advised that a full cost analysis had been done and the increase reflected what the actual cost of providing the service was.

The Committee **resolved** to confirm agreement with the proposed taxi and private hire fees noting the consultation responses and undertake to bring forward reviews of the policies expressly referred within a reasonable timeframe pursuant to meaningful consultation.

The meeting ended at 19:41