

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES LICENSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 20 September 2016

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COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Clarkson (Chair), Cook (Vice-Chair), Anwar, Brandt, Coulter, Lloyd-Shogbesan and Wade.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Julian Alison (Licensing Manager), Daniel Smith (Lawyer) and Catherine Phythian (Committee Services Officer)

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Azad and Landell Mills. There were no substitutions.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11. HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE: PROPOSALS TO AMEND THE CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THE LICENSING OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE TRADES IN LIGHT OF THE OXFORDSHIRE JOINT OPERATING FRAMEWORK FOR TAXI LICENSING.

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which detailed the proposed amendments to the criteria applicable to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades in order to promote safeguarding and awareness of safeguarding.

The Licensing Manager introduced the report. He explained that the proposed amendments were as a result of the recommendations arising from the recommendations that came out of the Serious Case Review into the Bullfinch child sexual exploitation operation. In summary the proposed amendments were:

- the introduction of **mandatory** Safeguarding Awareness Training to be attended by all licensed drivers.
- A requirement for all drivers to sign up to the Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Update Service.

In discussion the Committee noted the following points:

- The mandatory Safeguarding Awareness Training has been approved by Oxfordshire County Council's Local Designated Officer for child safeguarding
- Oxfordshire County Council will finance the training for those drivers who provide school transport services (expected to be the majority of drivers)
- to ensure that all Oxford City Council licensed drivers have attained this enhanced level of training it is proposed that the Licensing Authority meet the cost of training (£15.00 per attendee) for those remaining licence holders who do not provide school transport services
- the safeguarding awareness training would be a "pre-application" requirement for all new applicants
- the Licensing Manager will write to all existing licence holders informing them of this training requirement, and that no licence will be renewed until this training has been completed
- to allow time for the trade to digest this information and book a training course, the requirement on existing licence holders will take effect from 3 April 2017 and the costs incurred by the Licensing Authority be met within the 2017/18 Council year (i.e. for those who do not also hold a School transport badge with the County Council)
- making the DBS Update a mandatory requirement would remove the problems faced by both officers and licence holders relating to the slow processing of disclosure applications, and allow the Authority to be able to carry out swift background checks in order to promote our safeguarding objectives.

In conclusion the Committee noted that these recommendations would be adopted by neighbouring local authorities in due course but until that time it was possible that drivers licensed by them would still be able to drive within the city without having undertaken the mandatory training.

The General Purposes Licensing Committee **resolved** to:

1. **approve** the proposed amendments to the criteria and conditions applicable to licensed drivers as detailed within the report; and
2. **recommend** the amendments to Council for adoption.

12. UPDATE ON TAXI LICENSING ACTIVITY: APRIL 2016 - JULY 2016

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which informs the Committee of the progress made by the Taxi Licensing Function during the last Council year (April 2016 – July 2016).

The Licensing Manager presented the report. In response to questioning on safeguarding measures he advised that the Licensing Authority's high standards had received national acclaim. He said that there was not yet a consistent approach across the whole county but achievement of this remained a priority for the Licensing Authority. The Committee discussed what influence, if any, they as members could bring to bear on the neighbouring authorities. They agreed that this was an important matter that should be kept under review.

The General Purposes Licensing Committee resolved to **note** the contents of the report.

13. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2016.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee **noted** the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 5.15 pm and ended at 6.00 pm