

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Licensing Committee on Monday 26 September 2022

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Committee members present:

Councillor Mundy (Chair)	Councillor Corais
Councillor Coyne	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Miles	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Upton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Alison Daly, Lawyer
Emma Thompson, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer
David Stevens, Principal Lead Officer (Business Regulation Team)
Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)
Celeste Reyeslao, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Clarkson, Dunne, Humberstone, Lygo, Sandelson and Waite sent apologies.

8. Declarations of interest

None.

9. Annual Update on Taxi Licensing Activity 2022

Emma Thompson, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer, presented the report which set out the progress made by the Taxi Licensing function during the Council period of March 2020 and September 2022, covering the period of the pandemic. The following points were highlighted:

- The steady recovery of new driver, vehicle and operator licences issued by the Authority following a decline during the pandemic period.
- The increase in the number of cases referred to the General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committee for determination of new/current drivers, and immediate suspensions in the interest of public safety.
- 5 appeals regarding General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committee decisions, where 3 of the appeals were dismissed and costs awarded to the Council against the appellant. 1 appeal was still ongoing.

Notable and future work was also underlined including the variation of Hackney Carriage tariffs agreed by the Committee in March 2021; the Statutory Taxi and Private

Hire Vehicle Standards focusing on the protection of children and vulnerable adults which was published by the Department of Transport (DfT) in July 2020; the final revised Policy on The Relevance of Warnings, Offences, Cautions and Convictions approved by the Council in March 2022; and the ongoing implementation of an online application system as a result of the review of the current application processes for taxi and private hire licences. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer added that the Authority was due to commission an Unmet Demand Survey which had been delayed due to the pandemic.

In response to questions relating to the collection of applicants' gender data, the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer confirmed that the Authority was not privy to this information and as such would require raising a request with ICT in order to retrieve this data. She also pointed out the sensitivity involved if such question was to be mandatory on licensing application forms and suggested an optional gender question would be more appropriate, stating that the information would be gathered for statistics reasons. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer added that although there had been more female drivers in the system recently, it would be at the discretion of operators to ultimately increase the number of female drivers.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer confirmed that there had been an influx of complaints since the LTNs were introduced.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

10. Miscellaneous Licensing Update

David Stevens, Principal Lead Officer (Business Regulation Team), presented the report which set out an update on work relating to two services within the Council's Miscellaneous Licensing function. The report sought the Committee's endorsement of the proposed Street Trading Policy Review Programme for 2022-23. The Principal Lead Officer advised that the current policy, although workable, was due for review since it came into effect in May 2020. The suggested Review would follow a similar programme to the previous review, which involved public consultation and stakeholder collaboration. He proposed an extraordinary meeting be scheduled in alignment with the review timeline to enable the Committee to consider the pre-consultation draft Policy prior to the planned consultation in January 2023.

The Principal Lead Officer advised that the temporary Pavement Licensing provisions had been extended for a second time, pending the implementation of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which proposed that the Fast Track Pavement Licence regime be made permanent, subject to certain changes. The Principal Lead Officer added that a Government grant of £5063 had been paid to the Council and was being used to bring in temporary extra staff resources to deliver this service.

The Committee commented on the remarkable work that the officers had done which resulted in the award of the government grant.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Note** the current position and planned officer actions regarding the matters within the report.

- **Note and endorse** the proposed Street Trading Policy Review 2022-23 timeline, including the proposal that an extraordinary meeting of the GPL Committee be scheduled to align with the proposed review timeline set out in the report.

11. Sustainable Street Trading Motion referred to General Purposes Licensing Committee under Part 11.19(d) of the Constitution

Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Manager (Interim Acting), presented the report which set out a motion referred under Part 11.19(d) of Oxford City Council's Constitution to the General Purposes Licensing Committee and summarised possible actions available to the Committee.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Note** and consider the contents of this report.
- **Request** that officers update the consultation draft of the Street Trading Policy to reflect the points highlighted in the motion.
- **Request** that the Chair of the General Purposes Licensing Committee calls on the Cabinet Member for Health and Transport on behalf of the Committee to:
 - Work with stakeholders including at the County Council to consider the feasibility of increasing the provision of street based electric power points for street traders including in parks to phase out the use of diesel generators for energy generation by street traders.
 - Explore ways to encourage street traders to transition to electric vehicles during the initial grace period for the ZEZ with the aim to require street traders to use electric vehicles in the medium term.

12. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee agreed to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022 as a true and accurate record.

13. Dates and times of meetings

The Committee noted the dates and times of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.17 pm and ended at 7.00 pm

Chair

Date: Monday 6 February 2023

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.