

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **General Purposes Committee** held in the Broadcast from Castle House, Great North Road, Newark NG24 1BY on Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Crowe (Chairman)
Councillor R White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Arnold, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor M Cope, Councillor P Harris, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor Mrs S Saddington, Councillor I Walker, Councillor K Walker and Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead

REMOTE MEETING LEGISLATION

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police & Crime Panel Meetings)(England & Wales) Regulations 2020.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

41 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being recorded by the Council and that the meeting was being livestreamed and broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House.

42 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2020

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

43 FORWARD PLAN - APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022

AGREED that the Forward Plan for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 be noted.

44 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to update Members following the completion of the consultation process on the revised policy for Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing. The responses received were set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report with the proposed changes to the policy highlighted in Appendix B. The Business Manager advised that following receipt of the consultation responses a review of the current age policy for vehicles had been added to the Committee’s forward plan. He also

noted that given the pandemic and the restrictions therefrom it had resulted in licensed vehicles being greatly under-used in the past 12 months and the reduction in income of the licensed drivers. He therefore suggested that Members may wish to consider a temporary extension of 12 or 18 months to the current term of 8 years.

In considering the report a Member commented that the image on the front sheet bore little relevance to the district's Hackney Carriages or Private Hire Vehicles and should be changed. The Member also suggested that the time allocated to undertake the knowledge test should be extended to permit the use of a SatNav, noting that technology had move on and that it should be reflected in the policy. The Business Manager advised that the Council had moved to an online knowledge test in approximately 2017. It was designed to address a number of issues and not just a knowledge of the district. It required the applicant to have knowledge of the Council's policy, the highway-code and UK motoring laws. Elements of the test were also used to assess customer service skills, numeracy and command of the English language. Applicants were also permitted to use an A-Z during the test, which demonstrated their ability to navigate around the district. In noting the suggestion that use of a SatNav should be permitted, the Business Manager stated that he would give consideration as to this might be achieved if the Committee determined to include its use during the test.

A Member sought clarity on the use of mobile phones and the implications of them being used as a SatNav and how this related to the Council's Policy. In response the Business Manager advised that he did not believe that the use of such a device in a taxi would be contradictory to the Council's Policy.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the comments received from the consultation exercise on the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy be noted;
- (b) the draft Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy and Guidance 2021 be adopted;
- (c) the current age limit for vehicles be subject to a temporary extension of 12 months and that a review of the current limit be undertaken; and
- (d) Officers give consideration to the use of a SatNav during the knowledge test and how this may be implemented.

45 NATIONAL DATABASE OF REFUSED AND REVOKED LICENCES UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to update Members on the implementation and use of the national register of refused and revoked licences for Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers, which is known as the NR3.

The report set out the background to the development of the register and who would have access to the information therein. Paragraph 3.0 of the report detailed that all current licence holders had had their details checked against the NR3 register and that new drivers had been made aware that their applications would be subject to the same checks. The Council's application form and their website had been updated to include the same information. It was also reported that all drivers who had had their licences refused or revoked had been contacted and, where appropriate, their details had been added to the NR3 register.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

46 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS - 1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Committee considered the report presented by the Senior Licensing Officer in relation to the activity and performance of the Licensing Team which included details of current ongoing enforcement issues.

Information contained in the report related to the number of applications for grants and renewals of licences for Hackney Carriage; Private Hire; and Ambulance Drivers together with those for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. A note of ongoing enforcement activity was also listed with information as to what action had been taken to-date.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 6.26 pm.

Chairman