

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **General Purposes Committee** held in the Castle House, Great North Road, Newark NG24 1BY on Thursday, 2 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Crowe (Chairman)
Councillor I Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor L Brazier, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor M Cope,
Councillor A Freeman, Councillor P Harris, Councillor R Jackson,
Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor S Saddington, Councillor
T Thompson, Councillor K Walker, Councillor R White, Councillor
T Wildgust and Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead

27 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.

28 NOTIFICATION TO THOSE PRESENT THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND STREAMED ONLINE

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.

29 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2022

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2022 were a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 FORWARD PLAN (MARCH 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024)

NOTED the General Purposes Committee's Forward Plan from 1 March 2022 to 29 February 2024.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman took the opportunity to thank all Members for their work on the General Purposes Committee for the last four years. She also thanked Officers for their help and support throughout that period.

31 CHANGE OF RUNNING ORDER

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chairman amended the running order of the Agenda. The next item would be Agenda Item No. 8 – Polling Place Changes – May 2023, following which the Agenda order would resume as published.

32 POLLING PLACE CHANGES - MAY 2023

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services which sought to advise Members of a number of required changes to polling places ahead of the District/Parish Election to be held on 4 May 2023.

The report set out the proposed changes to 6 polling places, noting that the station in Southwell was still to be resolved. All the proposed amendments had been shared with the existing local Ward Members who had indicated their support. It was also reported that voters would be advised of the changes on polling cards which would be issued in sufficient time to enable voters to request a postal vote, should they not wish to vote in person. The Council would also publicise the changes through social medial channels.

In considering the report, a Member referred to the proposed change in Bilsthorpe from the Village Hall, which was not available due to refurbishment works, to The Green Community Centre. He noted that this location was at the edge of the village and queried whether alternative, more central locations, had been considered, suggesting the library and the welfare as possible alternatives. In response, the Business Manager advised that they could be considered and noted that it was hoped that this was only a temporary change.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the proposed change in polling places for the reasons set out in the report be approved;
- b) delegated authority be given to the Returning Officer to finalise the new polling place in Southwell following consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and local Ward Members; and
- c) a general delegation be given to the Returning Officer to make any further changes which may become necessary, again following consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and relevant Ward Members.

33 INTRODUCTION OF LOW AND ZERO EMISSION LICENSED VEHICLES

The Committee considered the report of the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager which sought Members' approval for a minor amendment to the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022 in order to facilitate low and zero emission vehicles and to improve accessibility.

The report set out the definition of an ultra-low emissions vehicle (ULEV) and how the current policy did not facilitate the licensing of electric format vehicles with paragraph 2.0 of the report setting out the proposed amendment to the policy to enable their registration.

In considering the report a Member raised the issue of the longevity of ULEVs, noting their higher capital cost and the low availability of second hand vehicles. He referred to the current age limit of vehicles within the policy, noting that it was mainly in relation to the bodywork of vehicles and not the engine. He noted that the engine of ULEVs would last for numerous years and requested that Officers give the matter consideration. In response, the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager advised that a consultation with the community would be undertaken in the future to look at improving the provision of electric vehicles and also the possibility of introducing some incentives for drivers to choose such vehicles in the future.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022 be amended to facilitate low and zero emission vehicles and to improve accessibility.

34 REVIEW OF TAXI FARES

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Licensing Officer which sought to update Members on the results of the taxi fare review consultation.

It was reported that during the review all 143 licensed Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers had been asked questions as listed within the report. Of those 143 drivers contacted, only 9 had chosen to respond, with their comments being listed in Appendix A. Officers carried out a comparison of costs with other local authorities within Nottinghamshire, the findings of which were detailed in Appendix B with Members being asked to consider the 3 options as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

In considering the report, Members noted the poor response to the consultation and queried the cost of recalibrating the meters, should an amendment to the tariff be made. They were advised that this would be at a cost of £25/£35 per vehicle. In relation to Option 3 – to only amend the starting time of tariff two (evening tariff), Members agreed that the current start time of 23:00 hrs was too late and suggested that this be amended to 20:00 hrs.

AGREED (unanimously) that the starting time of the tariff two (evening tariff) be amended with a revised starting time of 20:00 hrs.

35 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Licensing Officer which sought to present to Members the activities and performance of the Licensing Team which included details of current ongoing enforcement issues.

Information contained within the report related to the number of applications for grants and renewal 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 activities was also listed for information as to what action had been taken to-date.

In considering the report a Member raised the issue of how touting was dealt with on private land as he believed this to be inconsistent, specifically referring to incidents at the Northgate Railway Station. In response, Members were advised that rail employees had been moving on vehicles that had been touting as it was their land and property.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

36 MINUTES OF HC/PH DRIVER'S SUB-COMMITTEE

NOTED the Minutes of the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers Sub-Committee held on 17 January 2023.

Meeting closed at 6.16 pm.

Chairman