

Meeting	Licensing and Regulatory Committee
Date	11 October 2023
Present	Councillors Melly (Chair), Clarke, Kent, Kilbane, Ravilious, Rose, Wells [from 5:34pm], Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair) [until 6:38pm], Knight, Mason, Widdowson and Nicholls
In attendance	Matthew Boxall, Head of Public Protection David Cowley, Taxi Licensing Manager Jodi Ingram, Solicitor
Apologies	Councillors Hook, Smalley and Warters

38. Declarations of Interest (5:33pm)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

39. Minutes (5:34pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2023 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

40. Public Participation (5:36pm)

It was reported that there had been four registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Flick Williams spoke on wheelchair accessible taxis and noted that the number of accessible taxis had been reduced, and that there was a need for taxi operators to be educated to address attitudes towards disability awareness.

William Swords mentioned he had experience of driving taxis in York, and questioned the costs attributed to Annex 1 of the report. He mentioned that the infrastructure required for electric taxis in York

was not in place, and that there were internal combustion engine vehicles which were acceptable for taxi vehicles.

Gwen Swinburn spoke on general governance matters. She noted that there had been previous licensing sub-committee panels consisting of one political party and she raised the issue of members not being able to sit on licensing sub-committee panels for applications in the ward they represented.

Peter Monk-Steele spoke on accessible taxis. He questioned the existence of a knowledge test needed for taxi drivers in York. He also noted the suggestion of pre-bookable accessible taxis, and noted that as most taxi use was spontaneous, it would be difficult to pre-book taxis as a general rule.

41. Taxi Licensing Report on Delegated Decisions (5:55pm)

The Taxi Licensing Manager presented the report and highlighted a correction within Table 5 on page 11 – He noted that in total, there was one appeal withdrawn, and three were ongoing, not 4 ongoing appeals as stated in the report.

In response to questions from members, it was explained that:

- There was a timescale for drivers to re-submit medical forms, and that a reminder was sent to drivers before their current one had expired. This was a statutory requirement and drivers who did not comply could have their licence suspended.
- Local Authorities had a duty to liaise with neighbouring authorities when information was learned about a driver registered outside the authority's area.
- When a complaint had been made against a driver, they could be asked to re-take the knowledge test.
- The free knowledge training was funded due to a shortage of drivers in York's night-time economy.

Resolved: That Members noted the information in the report.

Reason: For the Committee to be updated on decisions delegated to officers in the Council's taxi licensing team.

42. Taxi Licensing - New Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Allocation Update (6:18pm)

The Taxi Licensing Manager presented the report.

In response to issues raised during public participation, the Taxi Licensing Manager noted that the prices included in Annex 1 of the report were provided by the Institute for Licensing and the Energy Saving Trust.

The Head of Public Protection stated that option 2 in the report's recommendations would allow licenses to be sent out to those who wanted to drive a Hackney Carriage for business, rather than to be used to sell on – as this was the best option for people to seek a return on the cost.

The Taxi Licensing Manager confirmed that around 15-20 of those on the waiting list had been contacted about license allocations prior to the meeting.

In response to questions from members, it was noted that:

- The Council had published a list of all public accessible vehicles on their website.
- All Hackney Carriage drivers were classed as self-employed and there was no obligation to do specific jobs. The licensing team was working with operators around accessibility bookings.

Resolved: Members instructed officers to progress the issuing of ten new hackney carriage vehicle licences in accordance with Option 2.

Reason: To have enabled officers to make swifter progress in ensuring new vehicles were placed on the roads and meet the unmet demand for hackney carriage vehicles.

43. Work Plan (6:52pm)

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Resolved: That the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan updated.

Cllr Melly, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.56 pm].