

Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 27 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold (Substitute for Ben Maney), Daniel Chukwu, Aaron Green, Vikki Hartstean, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji, Kairen Raper, Elizabeth Rigby and Sue Sammons

Apologies: Councillors Ben Maney, Graham Snell and James Thandi

In attendance: Paul Adams, Licensing Manager
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting on 1 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Licensed Vehicle Tinted Windows

The Licensing Manager presented the report at pages 9 to 14 of the agenda.

During questions from Members the following was highlighted:

- Officers had no concerns with the visibility of drivers and passengers when travelling in vehicles at night as long as the tinted windows were factory fitted and in line with national regulations.
- It was confirmed that Officers had completed a consultation a year ago and the proposed recommendation was in line with national guidance which could be found on the Government website.
- Some Members welcomed the change for the taxi trade as it would potentially save them money in the long run with not having to seek to have windows amended once purchasing a vehicle.

- It was explained tinted windows on vehicles were inspected when vehicles were taken through the compliance stage which took place twice a year.
- Officers outlined the difficulty of having a grading percentage for tinted windows. Currently only Road Traffic Police could carry out checks on the side of the road relating to tinted windows.

Members remarked on the use of CCTV in taxi vehicles, it was explained that the Council encouraged drivers to install CCTV within their vehicles, however if this was to be enforced then the Council would become the data controller, and this was not something which was possible at the current time. The Committee heard that all policies were line with national guidance.

The Chair put the recommendation on page 9 to vote.

For (10) Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Daniel Chukwu, Aaron Green, Vikki Hartstean, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji, Kairen Raper and Sue Sammons

Against (0)

Abstained (1) Councillor Elizabeth Rigby

RESOLVED: That the Committee agrees to amend Thurrock Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy pre-licensing standards for both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles for tinted windows as in point 3.6 of this report.

5. Restricted Private Hire Drivers Licences

The Licensing Manager presented the report at pages 15 to 24 of the agenda.

Through discussions the below points were raised:

- Benchmarking with other Local Authorities in the county, Thurrock were not the first nor last to introduce Restricted Private Hire Drivers Licences.
- Drivers who were successful through the recruitment stage would receive a restricted badge and would only be allowed to assist with the School Transport Contracts, they would not be allowed to work the taxi ranks around the borough, until they had completed the whole training course and knowledge test.
- It was highlighted that during Covid the taxi trade had a reduction in drivers, due to them having to find other jobs and since then recruitment hadn't picked up.
- Safeguarding Training was to be completed online and individuals were trained by a recommended provider used by other Local Authorities

The Chair put the recommendation on page 15 to vote.

For (8) Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Daniel Chukwu, Aaron Green, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji and Sue Sammons

Against (0)

Abstained (3) Councillors Vikki Hartstean, Kairen Raper and Elizabeth Rigby

RESOLVED: That the Committee approves for the introduction of a Restricted Private Hire Drivers Licence as set out in this report, amending Thurrock Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The meeting finished at 8.24 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk