

**DRAFT**

**Note:** These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

**LICENSING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025**

**Councillors Present:** Paul Dick (Vice-Chairman), Phil Barnett, Billy Drummond, Paul Kander, Jane Langford, David Marsh, Stephanie Steevenson, Clive Taylor and Martha Vickers

**Also Present:** Vikki Rigden (Lead Applications Officer), Mark Groves (Lead Licensing Officer), Thomas Radbourne (Zoom Host) and Benjamin Ryan (Clerk)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Nigel Foot and Justin Pemberton

**PART I**

**19. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**20. Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy**

The Committee/Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 3) concerning Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. Mr Mark Groves introduced the report.

Councillor Martha Vickers queried whether the Licensing Team should extend the consultation to groups involved with special needs and environmental concerns. Mr Groves confirmed that the consultation could be extended to special needs groups and that West Berkshire Council's (The Council) climate strategy was already considered within the policy.

Councillor Vickers questioned the environmental standards taxi drivers would have to adhere to. Mr Groves explained that all taxis will be expected to conform to euro six standards and that drivers could not be forced to adopt electric vehicles due to their expensive and limited nature.

Councillor Stephanie Steevenson explained that The Learning Disability Partnership Board would be a valuable consultee, however they did not cover physical disabilities.

Councillor Billy Drummond asked whether it could be made mandatory for the taxi trade to ask whether the passenger had any special needs and Mr Groves stated the Licensing Team would add it in.

Councillor Drummond questioned how many taxi drivers failed the knowledge test after six months and Ms Vikki Rigden stated this was a threshold that would be added with the new policy with drivers to be expected to mostly rely on their knowledge of multiple areas.

Councillor Phil Barnett put to officers that it would be beneficial to send reminders to the invested parties about the consultation to encourage greater engagement. Ms Rigden explained that the Licensing Team could send out reminders for the consultation.

Councillor Clive Taylor questioned whether CCTV should be mandatory in taxis. Mr Groves explained that it was not mandatory in West Berkshire, however it was being considered.

## LICENSING COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2025 - MINUTES

Councillors noted several typographical errors within the appendix.

In accordance with Section 10.7 of Part 10 of the Constitution the Vice-Chairman proposed to suspend standing orders to allow the Taxi Trade to speak, and this was seconded by Councillor Langford.

The proposal was put to vote and passed.

### **\*Standing Orders Suspended\***

The Taxi Trade addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekKDquTQujE&t=340s>

Councillor Drummond proposed to reinstate standing orders which was seconded by Councillor Langford. The proposal was put to a vote and duly passed.

### **\*Standing Orders Reinstated\***

The Vice-Chairman addressed the Committee regarding the decision to approve the draft policy document for consultation noting the grammatical errors within the document.

Mr Groves stated that the document had been reviewed and approved by the legal department of the Council, and he was satisfied that it could proceed to consultation. Mr Groves noted that any identified errors could be rectified before the consultation period began.

Councillor David Marsh expressed that the document should not be delayed further and should go out for consultation, allowing the trade and other stakeholders to voice their concerns and suggestions.

Councillor Taylor agreed, noting that while he had observed typos and some repetition, he found the document understandable and supported its release for consultation.

Councillor Barnett reiterated the importance of moving forward with the consultation process, emphasising the need for early submission of feedback to address any issues promptly.

Councillor Langford expressed a contrasting view, suggesting that the document should be revised to demonstrate high standards, like those expected from the taxi trade.

Councillor Vickers was concerned about the negativity expressed by the trade representatives, questioning whether the document's length and structure might hinder effective consultation.

Councillor Steevenson proposed that the document be approved for consultation, which was seconded by Councillor Drummond

The Vice-Chairman clarified that the approval was contingent upon correcting the specific errors identified during the meeting, including typographical errors and inconsistencies. He confirmed that the consultation would proceed according to the timetable outlined in the document, with the expectation that it would return to the committee for final agreement following the consultation period.

The Licensing Committee **RESOLVED** that:

2.1 AGREED that Officers should consult on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy set out in Appendix A subject to any changes made at this meeting of the Committee.

2.2 AGREED that the consultation should run from the 18 March 2025 to the 18 May 2025

**LICENSING COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2025 - MINUTES**

and that it will be promoted as set out in paragraph 4.9.

2.3 RECOMMENDED that on conclusion of consultation and consideration of responses, the matter to return for further consideration to a future 2025 Licensing Committee for adoption.

*(The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and closed at 4.50 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

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