

LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30th January, 2025
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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|---------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Present: | Councillor Joan Whieldon (Chair) | | |
| Councillors: | Johnson Heesom Sweeney | Adcock Wright J Williams | Whitmore Brown |
| Apologies: | Councillor(s) Wilkes, Skelding, Dymond, Allport and G Williams | | |
| Substitutes: | Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Craig Skelding) Councillor Lesley Richards (In place of Councillor Gillian Williams) | | |
| Officers: | Matthew Burton Geoff Durham Gillian Taylor | Licensing Administration Team Manager Civic & Member Support Officer Housing Manager | |

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

2. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. **MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meeting held on 29th November 2024 be received.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO PUBLIC PROTECTION MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

5. **PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE FEES AND CHARGES 2025/2026**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the proposed taxi and private hire fees, following up on last meeting and the consultation subsequently held.

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Cllr Sweeney noted the reduction of fees for taxi drivers' knowledge tests in alignment with the actual costs for the Council, which the Chair was also pleased about.

Resolved: That the proposed taxi and private hire fees for 2025-26 be approved.

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6. TAXI LICENSING POLICY - SUITABILITY GUIDELINES

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the updated Suitability Guidance for taxi and private hire licensing published by the Institute of Licensing which were to be included in the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy as was the original document.

Cllr Williams asked how this compared to the previous version of the Guidance.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager responded that most of it was pretty much the same as it was before and the changes were mainly to clarify things for decision makers based on actual cases over a five-year period.

Cllr Richards asked if there had been many cases where licensees were taken to court for predatory behaviours and then re-licensed for ten years.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager advised that there hadn't been any cases brought to the Council. Having these included in the Guidance now meant that if these were to happen there would be a starting point on how to proceed.

The Chair wondered what rate of consultation responses was to be expected.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager commented that consultations would often generate either very few responses or a very lot of responses. The rate of these would typically reflect how much of an issue the changes were perceived to bring and people who were not responding were generally happy enough that it wasn't a concern for them. The consultation would be sent to all license holders as well as other relevant stakeholders such as neighbouring local authorities and the police.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the report be noted; and
2. That officers may consult with relevant stakeholders on replacing the current Taxi Licensing Policy Suitability Guidance with Chapter 4 of the updated version, be approved.

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7. TAX CONDITIONALITY CONSULTATION

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on a suggested draft response to the HMRC consultation in relation to expanding tax conditionality to new sectors, two of which were administered by the Borough Council.

Cllr Brown enquired about consultants working for the Council.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager advised that these were not targeted by this regime.

Cllr Richards asked what a pedicab was.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager explained it was a pedal powered vehicle often found in London to carry passengers in seats located at the back.

The Chair commented that if these were not licensed, these were not insured which was problematic if someone was getting injured.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager confirmed their use needed to be regulated and a licensing regime would follow.

Cllr Hutchison expressed being pleased to see that animal welfare was taken into account.

The Licensing Administration Team Manager commented that the Council was requesting that any animal activity subject to licensing or registration would fall under the remit of the regulation.

- Resolved:**
1. That the contents of the report be noted; and
 2. That the officer proposed consultation response be sent to the Government prior to the closing date, be agreed.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

9. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There were no confidential matters discussed.

**Councillor Joan Whieldon
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.33 pm