

Report to Full Council (July 2019) from the Chair of Licensing & Public Protection

The Licensing & Public Protection Committee has met once since the last Full Council. The meeting took place on 11th June. Following a long consultation and numerous meetings between the Chair of Licensing and Public Protection, the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Taxi trade the Licensing and Public Protection Committee needed to resolve all the various elements of the proposed new Taxi policy.

TAXI POLICY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report introduced by the Council's Head of Environmental Health Services, Mrs Nesta Barker on the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2019-2022, asking Members to review the consultations received in respect of the draft taxi policy, and to discuss and agree any amendments to the proposed new Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy following the consultation period.

The report contained twenty-seven decisions for Members to agree upon. The principle decisions are set out below:

- English speaking and writing requirement for drivers

That, all new applicants and current licence holders must be able to converse orally and in writing in English to a standard that would reasonably be expected of a person undertaking the role of a taxi driver.

- Knowledge Test for Drivers

That, all new applicants are required to pass the Council's written test before the Council will grant them a driver's licence.

- Driver Requirements for Medical certificates

All applications must - Undergo Group 2 medical examination and provide the medical certificate issued by their registered GP or a Medical Practitioner who confirms they have had access to the full medical records.

- Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Criteria – Age of Vehicles

To adopt the same age/vehicle licensing policy as Stoke City Council currently use. That is that vehicles must be less than 7 years old when first licensed. When the vehicles become 10 years old they require safety/MOT tests at 6 monthly intervals and there is no maximum age. All new Hackney Carriages must be wheelchair accessible but owners of currently licensed saloon/hatchback/estate vehicles may replace the vehicle with one of a similar body type.

- Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Criteria – Age of Vehicles

That the Council adopt the same age/vehicle licensing policy at Stoke City Council currently uses. That is that vehicles must be less than 7 years old when first licensed. When the vehicles become 10 years old they require safety/MOT tests at 6 monthly intervals and there is no maximum age.

A new disciplinary system will also be introduced for all drivers, which will be simpler and more effective to administer.

The new policy containing all the matters that were resolved, will be brought back to the Public Protection Committee soon to agree an implementation date. In agreeing the new policy, the priority for members is public safety.

Cllr Mark Olszewski