

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Public Safety and Protection

Committee

22 January 2019 at 10.00 am



Members Present:- Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Fi Hance, Councillor Sultan Khan, Councillor Mike Langley, Councillor Ruth Pickersgill (Chair) and Councillor Estella Tincknell

Also in attendance:- Lynne Harvey – Legal Officer, Carl Knights – Licensing Officer, Jonathan Martin – Licensing Officer, James Roberts – Licensing Officer and Corrina Haskins – Democratic Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Davies, Carole Johnson and Steve Jones.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no public forum statements.

4. SUSPENSION OF COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES CMR10 AND CMR11 RELATING TO THE MOVING OF MOTIONS AND RULES OF DEBATE

RESOLVED – that having regard to the quasi-judicial nature of the business on the Agenda, those Committee Procedure Rules relating to the moving of motions and the rules of debate (CMR10 and 11) be suspended for the duration of the meeting.

5. PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Licensing Officer introduced the report and drew attention to the following points:

- In September 2018, the Public Safety and Protection Committee had agreed to implement legislation brought into effect under the Equality Act 2010 including the requirement for drivers to apply for exemptions;

- It was agreed that public consultation would take place on the introduction of two new policies a. Exemption from carrying wheelchair passengers and b. Exemption from carrying assistance dogs;
- The results of consultation were detailed in the Appendix to the report;
- The officer recommendation was that the two exemption policies be adopted.

Members expressed concern that nearly 80% of respondents in the consultation process were white British which did not reflect the ethnicity of the drivers, but it was noted that the information was also presented to the Taxi Forum and circulated to 1900 recipients of the newsletter.

RESOLVED that the following proposed exemption policies be adopted with immediate effect;

- a) Policy for Exemption Requests from carrying Assistance Dogs;
- b) Policy for Exemption Requests from carrying Passengers in Wheelchairs.

6. PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING POLICIES (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Licensing Officer introduced the report and drew attention to the following issues:

- There had been a number of areas of national interest and concern relating to taxi licensing legislation, including a Task and Finish Group which had been set up following a law commission review;
- The Group had published a report with 30 recommendations which were summarised in Appendix A of the report;
- It was important to manage expectations, the Licensing Authority did not have the power to address all the concerns and so the Authority needed to make clear which areas it could influence;
- The officers' recommendation was to set up an Officer/Member Working Party to consider the report of the Task and Finish Group and see if any of Bristol City Council Policies needed amending.

In response to questioning, the Licensing Officer reported:

- Although the Government had not responded to the Law Commission Review and Task and Finish Group recommendations, an audit of the Licensing Service had recommended that these recommendations be considered;
- The timescale for the establishment of the Working Party was February, with a view to reporting back its findings to a Public Safety and Protection Committee in June;
- The Working Party would need to meet approximately 3-4 times;
- In terms of benchmarking, it would be useful to look at the situation in Core Cities as well as neighbouring authorities;
- The Working Party could look at officer delegations to reduce the number of cases that are presented to Committee, but the Licensing Team was also looking



at ways to reduce this, such as tutorials available in different languages to avoid mistakes being made during the application process.

RESOLVED - that the Public Safety and Protection Committee:

- a) Establish a Member/Officer Working Party to consider whether any existing Bristol City Council hackney carriage and private hire policy provisions need to be reviewed in light of recent national reviews of taxi legislation;
- b) Councillors Richard Eddy (Conservative), Fi Hance (Green), Ruth Pickersgill (Labour) and a Liberal Democrat (Christopher Davies to be invited) be agreed as the members of the working party;
- c) That the Working Party engage with key stakeholders as part of the review prior to reporting back to the Public Safety and Protection Committee by October 2019.

The meeting ended at 10.26 am

