

Taxi Licensing Committee

Thursday 3 October 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Tippetts, in the Chair.

Councillor Moore, Vice Chair.

Councillors Gilmour, Holloway, Lugger, Ney and S.Nicholson.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Moore and Morton.

Also in attendance: Michele Battershill (Lawyer), Hannah Chandler-Whiting (Democratic Advisor), Steve Forshaw (Senior Enforcement Officer), Graham Hooper (Senior Intelligence and Licensing Officer) and Mark Wheeler (Enforcement Officer).

The meeting started at 10.03 am and finished at 1.01 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

31. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

32. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 as an accurate record.

33. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

34. **Appeal Cases**

There were no updates on appeal cases.

35. **Number of Certificates of Good Conduct Exemptions Granted**

There had not been any certificates of good conduct exemptions granted.

36. **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Fees**

Graham Hooper (Senior Intelligence and Licensing Officer) introduced the report and highlighted:

- a) Plymouth City Council regulated the Hackney Carriage (HC) and Private Hire (PH) industry through the licensing framework set out in the Plymouth City Council Act 1975;
- b) The cost of the licensing system could be divided into the processing of individual applications and the general administration and compliance monitoring of the system;
- c) There was a mistake contained within the report in Section 4.5, point 3, and the percentages of complaints were listed as 29% of the HC drivers compared to 71% of the PH drivers but it should have read 56% of the HC drivers compared to 44% of the PH drivers. This correction did not affect any cost calculations;
- d) The reduction in the number of Hackney Carriage licences, a national trend, had changed the ratio to Private Hire to: Hackney Carriage 24% and Private Hire 76%;
- e) A review of the fee structure and levels was last undertaken on 02 March 2023 and the fees had not been increased since April 2020;
- f) The predicted income and expenditure for the year had been reviewed and the reserve accounts were in a surplus position, and it was proposed that there is no increase in fee to the Licence fees for 2024/25;
- g) It was not recommended to reduce the fees for 2024/2025 due to economic uncertainty and resultant rise in costs to deliver the Taxi Licensing Service, for example 13% rise in associated consumables (vehicle plates/badges etc) and to fund service improvements including IT and digital development;
- h) The report was being presented later than usual to Committee for operational reasons;
- i) The intention was to review the licensing fees again in February 2025 to bring Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Fees in line with other Council fees and charges reviews.

The Committee agreed:

- I. That the fees would remain the same and not have any changes for the financial year 2024/25.

37. **Exempt Information**

The Committee agreed to pass a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to exclude the press and the public from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

38. **Confidential Minutes**

The Committee agreed the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 as an accurate record.

39. **Application for the Grant of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licence**

The Committee:

- a) Considered all that was said by the driver;
- b) Considered all of the information contained within the report;
- c) Considered all of the relevant policies referred to in the report;
- d) Asked itself whether it would want a person they cared for or a vulnerable person to be driven in a vehicle driven by the driver, the answer to that questions was yes;
- e) Found exceptional, clear and compelling reasons to depart from the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy guidelines.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Grant the application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence, subject to the driver completing the VRQ in "Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire" or its equivalent within 12 months of receiving the licence. Failure to complete the course by this time could result in sanctions including the possible revocation of their licence.

(At the conclusion of this item, the Committee adjourned from 11.23 am until 11.31 am).

40. **Application for the Grant of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licence**

The Committee:

- a) Considered all that was said and provided by the driver;
- b) Considered all of the information contained within the report;
- c) Considered all of the relevant policies referred to in the report;
- d) Asked itself whether it would want a person they cared for or a vulnerable person to be driven in a vehicle driven by the driver, the answer to that questions was yes.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Grant the application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence, subject to the driver completing the VRQ in "Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire" or its equivalent within 12 months of receiving the licence. Failure to complete the course by this time could result in sanctions including the possible revocation of their licence.

41. **Review Status of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver Licence**

The Committee:

- a) Considered the statement provided by the driver;
- b) Considered all of the information contained within the report;
- c) Considered all of the relevant policies referred to in the report.

The Committee agreed to:

- 1. Dismiss the appeal and the penalty points would remain from the date of issue;
- 2. The driver would be required to undertake the Safeguarding Training within 6 months.