

# Minutes of the Regulatory Meeting

**Location:** Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG



**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 commencing at 6.30pm

## Present:

**Councillors:** Anderson, Asher, Birch, Burrell, Finan (Chair), King, Sarfas, Whelband.

**Officers:** Liz Elliott – Deputy Chief Executive  
Jessica Nicholls – Senior Licensing Officer  
Ella Newman – Democratic Services Officer

### 1. Election of Chairman for 2023/24

The Chairman of the Council opened the meeting. She noted that the first item on the agenda was to Elect a Chairman of the Regulatory Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. She invited nominations from the Committee. Councillor Finan was nominated by Councillor Burrell. This was seconded by Councillor Sarfas, and there being no other nominations Councillor Finan was duly elected.

Councillor Finan assumed the Chair.

### 2. Election of Vice-Chairman 2023/24

The Chair of the Panel then invited nominations to the position of Vice Chairman of the Regulatory Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. Councillor Sarfas was nominated by Councillor Burrell. This was seconded by Councillor Asher and there being no other nominations, Councillor Sarfas was duly elected.

### 3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Gair, who was substituted by Councillor Asher, and from Councillor Bannister, who was substituted by Councillor Whelband.

### 4. Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

## **5. Draft Minutes of Regulatory Committee – 12.02.2019**

Councillor Burrell proposed the minutes, and they were seconded by Councillor Sarfas.

The committee agreed the minutes of the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 as an accurate record.

## **6. Review of Taxi & Private Hire Driver and Vehicle Policy**

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and explained the recommendations contained within the report. She noted that the policy is required to be reviewed and updated every 5 years, and the suggested changes were contained within the report appendix. The policy will be subject to a 12-week consultation with drivers in the district, as well as with neighbouring authorities.

The Chair then asked the committee for their questions and comments on the report.

Councillor King proposed the deletion of Recommendation 3 of the report, this was seconded by Councillor Whelband. The report on the consultation should instead be brought back to a further meeting of the Regulatory Committee. The vote was lost, and Recommendation 3 stands.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Do the power ratings listed take into account larger vehicles (e.g. SUVs)	This has been changed from the previous policy from minimum break horse power to power output, in order to account for more electrical vehicles. Being compared to other policies within the industry, this is the general metric used.
Should MPVs/SUVs be listed as a vehicle type?	In the new policy, 'estate vehicle' has been defined. Furthermore, there is a classification for transits and people carriers, which would include MPVs. It was taken onboard that SUV may be needed to be included.

<p>What is the basis for the proposed 25% reduction of licence fees for hybrid and wheelchair accessible vehicles? Will this eventually lead to a reduction in overall income for the Council?</p>	<p>It is to encourage further use of electric and hybrid, and wheelchair accessible vehicles. The policy is reviewed every 5 years, but fees and charges reviewed more regularly, to ensure this is generating the correct income.</p>
<p>How does the trade consultation take place?</p>	<p>Consultation will take place via trade meetings. An email will be sent to all licenced drivers in the district. It will also be advertised on the website, via social media, and likely word of mouth.</p>
<p>Are there any penalties for uber drivers using taxi ranks?</p>	<p>Licenced drivers will normally tell the Licencing Team. Unfortunately, there is no ability to enforce on vehicles not licenced by Harborough. In this case, details are sent to the licensing authority.</p>
<p>Do Hackney Carriages pay for use of the taxi ranks?</p>	<p>No, the licence fee covers the use of the rank.</p>
<p>Are the drivers' daily vehicle checklist review by the authority?</p>	<p>There will be spot checks on checklists via enforcement team. The checklist will include questions on the condition of the vehicle, the correct equipment is in the vehicle, correct signage is displayed, and general cleanliness of the vehicle.</p>
<p>What are the details of the proposed increased signage on the vehicle?</p>	<p>The increased signage will include signs on both sides of the vehicle, as currently, they only have to display on one side.</p>
<p>How do taxi drivers receive training on child exploitation?</p>	<p>This training is provided in house by the authority's Equality and Safeguarding Officer. This is required to be completed within 3 months of receiving their licence. Drivers face suspension for non-completion of the course. The team is looking at the potential for completing this training online via an external</p>

	training company, as well as disability awareness training.
What medical tests do the drivers go through and is there an eye test included in this?	Drivers are required to pass the equivalent of DVLA Group 2 medical, this is within the same category as professional driver standards (e.g. HGV drivers).
Is there an age limit for taxi drivers to receive their licence?	There is no age limit. However, there is an increase of frequency of medical checks.
Are driver tests mandatory on a national level? Or is this specific to Harborough District Council?	It's not a required test. The tests ensure that drivers are working within the district, as they must learn the area. Other districts have removed the local knowledge test, and this has increased licensed drivers working outside of their district.
How many people take the drivers tests, and what is the success rate?	Drivers must have completed the tests to receive their licence. They have 3 attempts to pass the tests, then they are required to wait 12 months to try again. In the past 7 years, there was only one case where someone wasn't able to pass within the 3 attempts.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Burrell, and seconded by Councillor Sarfas

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Regulatory Committee:

1. Notes the outcome of the review of the Hackney and Private Hire Driver and Vehicle Policy
2. Endorses the commencement of the public consultation for a period of 12 weeks.
3. That the Head of Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Regulatory Committee, is given delegated authority to consider any consultation responses received.

4. Subject to the outcome of 3 above, refer the final Hackney & Private Hire Driver & Vehicle Policy attached as Appendix A, to Council for approval and adoption.

## **7. Any Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 18:58

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