



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Licensing Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 10:00am
on Wednesday 13 December 2023

Present:

Cllr Chika Akinwale (substitute for Cllr John Trapp)
Cllr Charlotte Cane
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Keith Horgan
Cllr Julia Huffer
Cllr Bill Hunt (substitute for Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith)
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Kelli Pettitt
Cllr Gareth Wilson

Officers:

Stewart Broome – Senior Licensing Officer
Maggie Camp – Director Legal Services
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant
Hannah Walker – Trainee Democratic Services Officer

In attendance:

Karen Wright – ICT Manager

11. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ambrose Smith, Cllr Trapp, and Cllr Whelan.

Cllr Akinwale and Cllr Hunt were attending as substitutes.

12. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

13. Minutes

The Committee received the Minutes of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub Committee meeting held on 1 June 2023, and the Licensing Committee meeting held on 8 November 2023.

It was resolved unanimously:

That the Minutes of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub Committee meeting held on 1 June 2023, and the Licensing Committee meeting held on 8 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

14. Chairman's announcements

The Chairman wished Members a Happy Christmas and New Year.

15. Taxi Licensing Policy Update

The Committee considered a report, Y109 previously circulated, that detailed the results of the Taxi Licensing Policy consultation exercise. Members were presented a report and draft proposals to update the Council's Taxi Licensing policy which went to consultation between 11 September 2023 and 3 November 2023 to the following consultees: all licence holders, those registered on the Council's consultee mailing lists, all parish, town and city Councils, all ward Councillors, Cambs County Council, National Private Hire Association, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Local and national disability and access groups, and members of the general public via the council's website, to which no consultation responses were received.

The Senior Licensing Officer outlined the proposals that were consulted on. Proposal one would increase the base model price of executive vehicles at point of manufacture from £35,000 to £50,000 as set out in Part 2 Section 2.23.1 and Appendix A Section 36.1 of the Officer's report. The Senior Licensing Officer explained that the proposal would keep the private hire executive market exclusive.

Proposal 2 would introduce the requirement for all new petrol and diesel vehicles (including petrol and diesel powered hybrids and LPG conversions) to be Euro 6 compliant as set out in Appendix A Section 3.1 of the Officer's report. This proposal would follow the Council's green agenda to lower emissions. The Senior Licensing Officer also stated that electric vehicle charging points were not readily available within the District but the proposal was a good step in the right direction, and that newer cars tended to be safer. Most of the fleet fell within Euro rating category 5 and 6, with 13 in total for category Euro rating 3 and 4.

Proposal 3 would introduce a 2-year deadline for all existing Euro 3 and a 5-year deadline for all Euro 4 and 5 petrol and diesel vehicles (including diesel and petrol powered hybrids and LPG conversions) to be Euro 6 compliant as set out in Appendix A Section 3.2 and 3.3 of the Officer's report. The Senior Licensing Officer clarified that anyone who currently had a vehicle in the fleet, could continue to licence for two years for a newer vehicle, and five years for Euro 3 and 4 vehicles. The proposal would give the trade time and flexibility to transition to new requirements, and brand-new licences would have to comply with Euro 6.

Proposal 4 would amend the rules regarding land line phones at operator bases as set out in Appendix F Section 21 of the Officer's report. The Senior Licensing Officer explained that Private Hire operator bases must have a land line phone installed at their base location. Most bookings were made via broadband internet connections and VOIP telephones, the amendment would give greater flexibility to the trade.

The Senior Licensing Officer concluded to say that the proposals, if approved, would support the Council's corporate objects of achieving a Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire, and providing better safety standards and more passenger/driver comfort than older vehicles. The proposals would not have a financial impact on new or existing drivers, the only financial impact would be for those who applied for a new vehicle licence or renewed an existing non-compliant vehicle licence once the transitional period ended.

The Chairman invited questions to the Senior Licensing Officer.

Members queried what effect the proposals would have on specialist cars such as wedding and funeral cars. The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that there were specific conditions for novelty vehicles such as limousines and converted fire engines, and that those vehicles were exempt from the requirement of the policy.

The Chairman opened the debate. Members commended the Officer's report and had no further questions.

It was resolved (unanimously):

1. That the base model price of executive vehicles at point of manufacture be increased from £35,000 to £50,000, as set out in Appendix A section 36.1 (page 39) of the report.
2. That a requirement for all new petrol and diesel vehicles (including petrol and diesel powered hybrids and LPG conversions) to be Euro 6 compliant be implemented, as set out in Appendix A section 3.1 (page 31) of the report.
3. That a 2-year deadline for all existing Euro 3 and a 5-year deadline for all existing Euro 4 and 5 petrol and diesel vehicles (including diesel and petrol powered hybrids and LPG conversions) to be Euro 6 compliant be introduced, as set out in Appendix A section 3.2 & 3.3 (page 31) of the report.
4. That the rules regarding land line phones at operator bases be amended, as set out in Appendix F, section 21 (page 66) of the report.
5. The policy be adopted in full.

16. Senior Licensing Officer’s update

The Committee considered a verbal report to update Members that the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance revision had been published on 24 November 2023, and therefore the Licensing Team would revisit the adopted policy to consider any changes that may need to be made because of the published guidance. In addition, an audit review was carried out in 2023 which highlighted that the Licensing Enforcement Policy was out of date and in need of review, which would come to Committee in the new year.

17. Forward agenda plan

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan. The Senior Licensing Officer and the Chairman agreed that the 17 January 2024 Licensing Committee meeting would be cancelled, with the next meeting scheduled for 14 February 2024.

It was resolved:

That the January 2024 Licensing Committee meeting would be cancelled, and the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10:18am

Chairman.....

Date.....