

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Licensing and Community Safety Committee held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Tuesday, 8th March 2022 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Tucker (Chair)

Councillors Biederman, Bulled, Cann, Chesters, Gubb, Hunt, Pearson, D. Spear, L. Spear and York

Officers:

Solicitor, Public Protection Manager, Licensing Consultant and Corporate and Community Services Officer

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Henderson, Orange and Yabsley.

41. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022 (circulated previously) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest announced.

43. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Committee considered a report in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy amendments (circulated previously) by the Public Protection Manager.

The Public Protection Manager invited the Licensing Consultant, Lee Staples, to present highlights from the proposed amendments to the Committee.

The Licensing Consultant provided the following:

- After an informal discussion with members during their last meeting, their comments in respect of vehicle standards had been incorporated into the proposed amendments at Appendix B, page 109 of the agenda.

- The age restriction on a vehicle had been lowered to 3 years of age at first licensing, with consideration given year on year dependant on the condition of the vehicle at inspection.
- Due to the cost of purchasing electric and/or disabled adapted vehicles the age restriction would allow for older vehicles at the point of first licensing, (6 years old).
- The authority was not allowed to subsidise wheelchair accessible vehicles by way of the Council's fees.
- The biggest proposed change was to the standard of vehicles and it was hoped that the tracked changes document would provide ease of finding the amendments made.
- Any further changes to the policy that come about as a result of the consultation would presented back to the Committee
- It had been discussed with members of the team and decided that CCTV would not be recommended to form a requirement in North Devon at present. It was acknowledged that it was expensive to set up a suitable system that would meet the Council's criteria. If CCTV was already installed in vehicles there would be no requirement to upgrade the system, albeit that any new systems would need to conform with the proposed new standards recommended.
- The introduction of a daily checks log had been put forward by Officers and was a standard requirement in the industry.
- If a complaint was received against a driver then there would likely be a recorded interview held. This would be a condition of the licence issued and the request had to be made in writing to the driver concerned. This would professionalise complaints.

In response to questions. The Public Protection Manager gave the following replies:

- There was legislation around the idling of engines that she would investigate. Information on this legislation would be presented to Committee at a future meeting.
- The daily checks could be entered onto a word document held electronically or printed off and completed by hand.
- Reference to the environment and health, in terms of idling engines would be added into the Code of Conduct drivers were expected to abide by.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Licensing Service carry out a formal consultation on the proposed amended policy; and
- (b) That the results of the consultation be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

44. RESPONSE FROM HOME OFFICE ALCOHOL TEAM

The Committee considered a letter received from the Home Office Alcohol Team (circulated previously).

The letter was in response to a request made by the Licensing and Community Safety Committee to Central Government lobbying for an additional Licensing Objective in relation to the environmental consideration of single use plastics at licensed events. The Alcohol Team would not pursue the request as the issue was dealt with under the Environmental Bill.

The Public Protection Manager advised the Committee that littering could be considered as a public nuisance but that the use of single use plastics at an event was not considered a public nuisance and could not therefore be added as a condition when considering a premises licence application. The Environmental Head Lead Officer attended Safety Advisory Group meetings (typically held for events in excess of 500 attendees) where best practice guidance was offered to applicants ahead of an event.

The Licensing Consultant added that Exeter City Council had passed a resolution whereby all street traders were banned from using single use plastics, and if an event were to be held on Council owned land conditions could be imposed.

The response was noted and the Public Protection Manager was requested to write to the MP seeking her views on the response received from the Home Office.

45. LICENSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing and Community Safety Sub-Committee D held on 24 January 2022 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of that Sub-Committee.

Chair

The meeting ended at 10.55 am

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.