

MEETING
DATE 09.11.21

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee (Informal)** held at the **Virtual Meeting using Zoom meeting software on Tuesday 9 November 2021.**

(10.00 - 10.35 am)

Present:

Councillor David Recardo (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Wes Read
Adam Dance	Paul Rowsell
Karl Gill	Andy Soughton
Tony Lock	Martin Wale
Crispin Raikes	William Wallace

Officers

Rachel Lloyd	Specialist - Licensing
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Vicki Dawson	Lead Specialist (Environmental Health)
Jo Morris	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)

9. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meetings (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meetings of the Licensing Committee held on 8th December 2020 and 13th July 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Sub Committees held on 8th February 2021, 26th April 2021, 8th June 2021 and 13th July 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

10. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dave Bulmer, Kevin Messenger and Linda Vjeh.

11. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Public Participation at Committees (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

13. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 5)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Licensing Committee would be held on Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 10.00am.

14. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy Consultation (Agenda Item 6)

The Specialist – Licensing explained that the consultation on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy was published on the Council’s consultation hub (Citizen Space) and commenced on 1 August 2021 and ended on 26 September 2021. In addition to this, the consultation was sent to a number of consultees including all licensed drivers, operators and proprietors and other district council’s that had a policy.

The Specialist – Licensing said that the consultation comprised of the policy, details of the changes made to the policy and a questionnaire which focussed on views to do with the key changes. Respondents also had the opportunity to comment on any other aspect of the policy. At the end of the consultation, a total of 14 responses were received. She informed members that details of the questions asked and the responses were outlined in detail in the agenda report. In most questions there was a significant response in favour of the suggested policy or no opinion was offered. The only questions where there was significant divided opinion were in relation to:

- a change from an age limit on private hire vehicles to applying the current EURO emission standard for new applications
- a change from requiring interim MOTs to vehicles under the age of 5 requiring a vehicle inspection at the time of application or renewal and having one MOT and vehicles over the age of 5 would require a vehicle inspection at the time of renewal
- a change to the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles

The Specialist – Licensing recommended that no further revisions were required to the policy based on the consultation responses.

During the discussion, Members raised a number of comments and questions. In response, the Lead Specialist – Environment and Specialist – Licensing advised members of the following:

- The percentage of wheel chair accessible vehicles was currently well above the 25% proposed. If it were to drop below the 25% as stated in the proposed policy new vehicles at that point would have to be wheelchair accessible.
- There had been very few responses received on the proposed policy in relation to the change to the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles in comparison to the number of people consulted. It was felt that the proposal was the best balance that could be achieved in view of the recommendation from the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.
- The Licensing Specialist had delegated authority to consider applications for non-wheelchair accessible vehicles and only in exceptional circumstances would they need to be referred to the Licensing Committee.

- The proposed policy regarding the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles applied to Hackney Carriage fleet and not the Private Hire operators.
- The 14 responses received were from a variety of sources including private hire operators, vehicle licence holders, drivers and users.
- The draft revised policy proposed a new requirement for vehicles over 5 years to obtain an inspection at the mid-point of the vehicle licence. All references to mileage had been removed.
- A driver's licence could be issued for up to 3 years. A vehicle licence was only issued for a year.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to approve the recommendations of the report.

Members noted that the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy would be presented to Full Council for adoption in January 2022.

- RESOLVED:** That the Licensing Committee:-
1. Noted the results of the consultation.
 2. Agreed that no further revisions are required to the policy based on the consultation responses.
 3. Agreed that the proposed policy be presented to Full Council for formal adoption.

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Chairman

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Date