

Regulation and Review Committee

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Present: Councillor T Mulvenna (Chair)
Councillors L Bartoli, T Brady, B Burdis, J Cruddas,
C Davis, John Hunter, G Madden, M Madden, J O'Shea,
P Oliver and J Wallace

Apologies: Councillors S Brockbank, D Cox, J Mole and A Percy

RQ18/22 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

RQ19/22 To receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted

Cllr Brian Burdis declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 5 Review of the North Tyneside Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, as one of his family members was a private hire driver.

RQ20/22 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 be confirmed and the minutes of the Panel meetings held on 3 June 2021, 2 December 2021, 13 January 2022 and 17 January 2022 be noted.

RQ21/22 Review of the North Tyneside Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy

The Committee received a report which set out the details of a consultation exercise which was underway in relation to a review of the North Tyneside Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (the Policy).

The North Tyneside Transport Strategy, approved by Cabinet in May 2017, committed to managing North Tyneside's transport network effectively, considering all forms of travel including hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and set out that the Authority supports safeguarding of vulnerable people, for example through hackney carriage and private hire licensing policies and the design of infrastructure.

In July 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) produced Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (the Standards) under the Police and Crime Act 2017 which the department expected to be implemented by all licensing authorities. This formed part of the review of the Policy.

An officer working group was set up to commence the review of the Policy and make the required amendments to bring the Policy up-to-date.

A revised draft Policy for consultation was appended to the report.

The key amendments proposed to the Policy included:

- Introduction of Basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record check for vehicle proprietors
- Requirement of operators to maintain a register of booking staff and confirmation they have had sight of a Basic DBS certificate for such staff
- Periods for individuals to be free of convictions to be able to hold a licence has changed in line with the Standards
- New Passenger Guidance Document
- The Authority making a referral to the DBS and the police following refusal/revocation of a driver's licence where appropriate.

A summary of the amendments proposed was amended to the report.

At its meeting on 24 January 2022 Cabinet approved the commencement of a public consultation in relation to the proposed changes to the Policy. The engagement process would take place over a period of 6 weeks, ending on 8th April 2022 and would include appropriate engagement through the Engagement Hub with residents and businesses including representatives of the hackney carriage and private hire trade and all Elected Members. The consultation exercise also provided the opportunity to raise additional issues for consideration as part of the Policy review.

Members of the Regulation and Review Committee were asked to make their comments known on the revised Policy either by completing the online response form, available on the Council's website or by submitting a response to the Chair of Regulation and Review Committee.

At the conclusion of the engagement period the draft Policy would be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

Members discussed the vehicle age requirements in the Policy and asked whether this was something set by government or agreed locally. It was explained that the changes relating to the age of vehicles was brought in when the Policy was last reviewed in February 2020 and that this was based on the regional view at the time.

A member of the Committee asked if training on safeguarding and child sexual exploitation remained a compulsory requirement for hackney carriage and private hire drivers. It was confirmed that the requirements in relation to this training remained unchanged in the Policy.

It was **agreed** to 1) note the report; and 2) for members of the Committee to submit any views on the proposed changes to the Policy, or any additional areas for consideration, via the online consultation form or via the Chair of Regulation and Review Committee.