

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillors Carnell, Ennis, McGonigle, Page, Rowland, Rynn and Skeats.
Councillor Barnett-Ward attended via Microsoft Teams

Apologies: Councillors Challenger and Woodward.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Licensing Applications Committee meeting held on 22 June 2021 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

5. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE EMISSIONS AND AGE POLICY REVIEW

Further to Minute 2 of the meeting held on 9 December 2020, the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to review the decision to pause the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Emissions and Age Policy for two years until 1 October 2022 and a request by the Reading Taxi Association (RTA) to extend the pause for a further year until 1 October 2023.

The report explained that officers recommended the extension of the pause for one year but added that 16 of the oldest and most polluting vehicles should be taken off the fleet by 1 October 2022. This would ensure that the Council continued to progress towards meeting its obligations in respect of climate change and air quality, whilst acknowledging the severe impact of the pandemic on the taxi trade. The report also set out a recommendation that the incentive for those upgrading their vehicles to an Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicle or an 100% electric vehicle that had never been on the fleet before to receive a free licence for the first year on the fleet be extended for a further year until 1 October 2023.

Ross Jarvis, Senior Environmental Health Officer, reported that since the report had been published, officers had been asked by the RTA to reconsider the number of vehicles that should be removed from the fleet on 23 October 2022. The RTA explained that only six of the 16 vehicles to be removed were of the TXII type and asked that the remaining 10, which were of the same type (TX4) and emissions level as the other taxis that were not required to come off until 23 October 2023, also be allowed to remain on the fleet until that date. The RTA also asked that 15 vehicles which were emissions class Euro 5a, which had been registered in 2008 and were due to come off the fleet on 23 October 2023 be granted an extension until 23 October 2024 as they had not otherwise benefitted from the pause to the policy to reflect the effects of the pandemic on the trade.

Asif Rashid, Chairman of Reading Taxi Association, was present at the meeting and addressed the Committee, which considered the RTA's requests. The Committee noted that this was a balancing act between the Council's environmental improvement commitments and the need to support to the taxi trade during its recovery following the pandemic. The Committee felt that it would be helpful to

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2022

have an update report during autumn 2022 covering the Hackney Carriage Vehicle emissions and age policy and the unmet demand survey.

Resolved -

- (1) That a hybrid approach be applied to extend the pause in policy for a further year until 23 October 2023 with the following changes:
 - (a) the six TXII vehicles registered in 2008 be removed from the fleet by 23 October 2022, with the remaining 10 vehicles being allowed to remain on fleet until 23 October 2023;
 - (b) the 15 class Euro 5a vehicles that were due to be removed from the fleet by 23 October 2023 be allowed to remain on fleet until 23 October 2024;
- (2) That the incentive of a free first-year's licence for Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicles or 100% electric vehicles be extended until 1 October 2023;
- (3) That a further report on Hackney Carriage vehicle emissions and age policy and the unmet demand survey be submitted to the Committee during Autumn 2022.

6. REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF GAMBLING LICENSING PRINCIPLES

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to approve the revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix RS-1 - Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles;
Appendix RS-2 - List of Consultees;
Appendix RS-3 - Summary of Consultation Responses;
Appendix RS-4 - Climate Impact Assessment.

The report explained that the policy should be reviewed on a three-yearly basis and that the current Policy ran from 31 January 2019 to 31 January 2022. A consultation on the Policy had been carried out between 14 December 2021 and 11 January 2022, including various bodies within the gambling industry, groups that dealt with the effects of gambling and the responsible authorities stated in the Gambling Act 2005.

The report also explained that following the consultation, there were only minor changes to the policy, which included:

- Updating to add some details of additional processes for clarity;
- Authorising officers to cancel club gaming and club machine permits where no annual fee had been received;
- Updating the map of Reading and the Local Area Profile Map;
- Updating statistics and contact details;
- Removal of section 11.2 due to the stakes for Fixed Odds Betting Terminals having been reduced to £2 instead of £100 (as of 1 April 2019). There had

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2022

been no reports of these machines being anymore detrimental than other category B machines since the reduction in stakes and therefore they did not warrant specific mention in the Policy.

Robert Smalley confirmed that the title of Section 14 of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles should be amended to “Brighter Futures for Children”.

Resolved -

That the revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles, including the change of the title of Section 14 to “Brighter Futures for Children”, be approved for implementation from 31 January 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.33pm