

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on
Monday, 8 February 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair
Councillor Eileen Wilson – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya Peter Fane
Jose Hales Geoff Harvey
Mark Howell Steve Hunt
Alex Malyon Peter McDonald
Deborah Roberts Heather Williams

Officers: Jon Hall Commercial and Licensing Services Manager
Jane Jackson Senior Resource Officer
Paul Weller Legal Adviser
Victoria Wallace Scrutiny and Governance Adviser

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone and Clare Delderfield.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

3. **Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards**

The Technical Officer presented the report which summarised the Department for Transport's new statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle standards, which it recommended licensing authorities adopted unless there was a compelling local reason not to. Licensing Committee members discussed these standards.

The Technical Officer informed the committee that officers worked closely with the Police, who informed officers pro-actively of any information that was relevant to any South Cambridgeshire licence holder. Officers were also notified of any relevant information through the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Technical Officer explained that with the proposed new standard, officers would be notified of any arrest and release of a licence holder, in addition to any convictions. The timeframe required for licence holders to report this to the licensing authority would reduce from 72 to 48 hours. The Technical Officer informed committee members of the reporting methods available to licence holders and clarified that there was no requirement for the licensing authority to take any action within 48 hours. The

committee was supportive of the adoption of this standard and suggested that notification of restraining orders should be added to the reporting requirements.

The Technical Officer explained the process of licence holders undergoing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The committee was informed of the costs for this and the subscription to the DBS update service. The committee was informed that licence holders were encouraged to subscribe to the DBS update service, which would inform the licensing authority if a licence holder received a conviction after undergoing a DBS check. Although it was a requirement for licence holders to notify the council of any convictions, subscription to the DBS update service was a safeguard if a licence holder failed to fulfil this requirement. The committee was informed that the licensing authority could suspend or revoke licences if licence holders refused to subscribe to the update service or have a DBS check. The Technical Officer informed the committee that the Disclosure and Barring Service would be introducing a direct debit payment system so those subscribing to the update service could pay by direct debit.

The committee discussed the requirement for all Licensing Committee members to be trained. The Legal Adviser confirmed that he was satisfied with the level of member training provided to date, which had been provided by a nationally acknowledged trainer.

The committee discussed the proposed standard for language proficiency of licence holders. Committee members requested that the language certification procured by the council, in addition to being an accredited qualification, should be appropriate for the work that was done by private hire and hackney carriage drivers. Members also requested that understanding was given to those who had trouble with reading due to dyslexia; officers confirmed that they were aware of and sensitive to such issues. The Licensing Committee was supportive of this proposed standard for language proficiency.

The committee discussed the proposed standard relating to booking and dispatch staff and were supportive of this.

Following careful consideration of the proposed new standards, the licensing Committee **recommended** that the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing approved the new standards, as written licence conditions, policy requirements and procedures.

The Meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.
