

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

11 MAY 2021

Present: Councillor Mackie(Chairperson)
Councillors Asghar Ali, Derbyshire, Goddard, Hudson,
Lancaster, Dianne Rees, Robson and Wood

17 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Jacobsen.

18 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

19 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of 3 November 2020, 1 December 2020, 5 January 2021, 2 February 2021 and 2 March 2021 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

20 : GREEN FLEET TAXI PILOT: A REQUEST FOR FULL LIVERY

Following a request received from the Welsh Government Members were asked to consider approving a full livery scheme for entirely electric, wheelchair accessible, hackney carriage vehicles as part of a Green Fleet Pilot Scheme. The scheme aims to encourage the taxi trade to switch to zero-emission vehicles. Members were advised that currently the authority only permits full livery on 'London style' taxis.

The Welsh Government scheme will operate in three areas across Wales. The scheme is a 'try before you buy' initiative, allowing taxi drivers to try a fully electric, wheelchair accessible vehicle for 30 days free of charge. The trial will include free electric charging, insurance, vehicle licensing and breakdown cover funded by Welsh Government. The pilot is intended to assist Welsh Government in achieving its target of de-carbonising the taxi fleet entirely by 2028 as it is hoped it will help taxi drivers to realise the financial and environmental benefits of zero-emission vehicles and in turn contribute to the transition from diesel/petrol vehicles to zero-emission vehicles.

A full livery has been requested for the hackney carriages involved in this pilot scheme to ensure the initiative is advertised across the area and to encourage other drivers to be a part of the scheme. A copy of the requested livery design was detailed at Appendix A of the report.

Responding to a question from the Committee, officers confirmed that 16 vehicles will be participating in the scheme. Drivers will be required to make an application to participate in the pilot.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the Committee approved the request by Welsh Government to allow full livery on all the fully electric, wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot scheme.
- (2) that the Committee agreed to grant delegated authority to an Operational Manager of the Shared Regulatory Services to approve door stickers that will be used to identify Cardiff Hackney Carriages.
- (3) the Committee agreed that Condition 5.2 (f) of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions be amended as follows:

“Full external advertising livery for one product is permitted on the whole of the vehicle subject to the advertisement being approved by the authority, in writing, prior to its use. This condition applies to purpose-built vehicles which meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness, along with fully electric vehicles involved in the ‘Green Fleet Pilot’ scheme’ that also display approved door stickers identifying them as a Cardiff Hackney Carriage.”

21 : REVIEW OF CARDIFF COUNCIL’S STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE (TAXI) AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES, DRIVERS AND OPERATORS

The current Statement of Licensing Policy relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators has been in place since 2008. Members were advised that as new statutory standards have been published by the Department of Transport (DfT) and new recommendations have been published by the Welsh Government it was proposed that the authority review its policy in order to incorporate these new standards and recommendations.

The new standards introduced by the DfT focussed on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Welsh Government recommendations aimed to improve the consistency of licensing standards and increase public safety. The recommendations would also form the basis for the development of national standards for all local authorities in Wales.

Members received a report highlighting the main changes proposed to the Statement of Licensing Policy, as follows:

Drivers

- Requirement for drivers to join the Disclosure & Barring Service
- (DBS) Update Service and have a DBS check every 6 months.
- Overseas criminal record check for drivers.
- Adopting the Welsh Government’s Driver Code of Conduct.
- Updating the Private Hire Driver Conditions in line with the Welsh
- Government’s Recommendations

Vehicle

- Requirement for vehicle proprietors to have an annual DBS check.
- Overseas criminal record check. □ Adopting the Welsh Government's policy on CCTV and Video Point
- of Impact Systems (VIPS)/Dash Cams in taxis and private hire vehicles.
- Impose the Welsh Government's recommendations for accessibility conditions on vehicle proprietors of taxis and private hire vehicles.

General

- To commit to reviewing Statement of Licensing Policy every 5 years in accordance with the DfT's Statutory Standards.

The Chairperson opened the debate on this item. Members were supportive of the proposed changes, particularly in relation to the harmonisation of common standards across all Welsh licensing authorities and the requirement for drivers to join the DBS Update Service. Officers stated that drivers would still be required to advise the licensing authority of any offences.

A Member noted that the report highlighted that there were no property or personnel impact assessment implications included within the report. Concerns were raised that the introduction of CCTV into vehicles would clearly have an impact on the property of proprietors. There would also be personnel implications if overseas applicants are required to provide the equivalent of a DBS check from their country of origin. Officers confirmed that should the Committee approve the recommendations in the report those issues would be addressed by the equality impact assessments to be undertaken as part of the consultation process.

The Committee also received representations from Lee Ward and Yusef Jama of Unite union. Lee Ward raised concerns regarding the authority's intention to place all policies in relation to drivers, proprietors and operators under one over-arching policy as this may prove difficult for each party to find information pertaining to them quickly and easily. There was a danger that the resulting policy document would be far too large and confusing. Officers advised that drivers, proprietors and operators would still have easily accessible, stand-alone policies. However, bringing them together in one document would simplify the Statement of Licensing Policy. When a licence is issued the licence holder would be issued with a copy of the policy/conditions relating to the licence. They would not receive the whole Statement of Licensing Policy. Yusef Jama highlighted concerns regarding the requirement to regularly renew driver's identification badges. Officers stated that feedback from the trade would be welcomed regarding this requirement during the consultation.

RESOLVED - That

- (1) the Committee approves the review of its Statement of Licensing Policy relating to the Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators in line with the new DfT Statutory Standards and the Welsh Government's Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Recommendations.

- (2) the Committee agreed to consult with the trade and the wider public (including relevant local organisations for example; accessibility groups) on a draft Statement of Licensing Policy.

22 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

The meeting terminated at 1.30 pm