

Licensing Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 27th March, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Davis (Chair), S Parmar (Vice-Chair), B Bains, M Holledge, Qaseem, Shah (from 6.53pm), Strutton and Wright.

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor D Parmar.

PART 1

30. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

31. Guidance on Predetermination/ Predisposition - To Note

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on predetermination and predisposition.

32. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14th February 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

33. Proposal for Safeguarding Awareness 'Refresher' Training for all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators.

In July 2015 the Licensing Committee approved mandatory Safeguarding Awareness training for all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators. The approval followed similar training being approved and implemented by local authorities following a number of publicised high profile cases relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), trafficking and modern slavery, some of which involved Hackney Carriage (HC) and Private Hire Drivers (PHD). The Licensing Manager, Mr Sims, reminded Members that current training was being provided in house by Members of the Licensing Team, CSE Co-Ordinator and the Adult Safe-Guarding Co-Ordinator.

It was noted that the Department for Transport had published draft statutory guidance entitled 'Taxi and private Hire Licensing - Protecting Users - Guidance for Local Authorities' which was proposing a range of robust measures to protect taxi and private hire vehicle passengers. It was proposed that 3 yearly refresher safeguarding training be introduced which would ensure that all concerned are kept abreast with and up to date with trends and types of exploitation. The mandatory training would commence in September 2019, with a requirement for all existing drivers to complete the training between 2 September 2019 and 31 August 2020. To reduce Council costs and officer time, it was proposed that any future training be outsourced to 'Personnel Checks' - an experienced accredited training provider, who currently delivered Safeguarding Awareness training to a number of local authorities. The Licensing Manager informed the Committee that the anticipated cost of the training would equate to £30 per driver and that this would be valid for a three year period.

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Members received a short presentation from Ryan Sidley, Personnel Checks, which outlined the course modules and learning outcomes. It was highlighted that Personnel Checks were also the approved trainers for neighbouring local authorities. It was noted that the course was a two hour session with a test on completion.

A consultation on the proposals was conducted with all licensed HC and PHD's and Operators. A number of responses were received, including a petition from Slough Taxi Federation. Mr Hussain, representing Slough Taxi Federation addressed the Committee, stating that drivers had attended a number of similar courses and in his opinion there was no benefit to having a refresher course. Furthermore, it was submitted that the costs of the training should be met by the Local Authority and not drivers, who were facing financial hardship.

A number of issues were raised in the ensuing discussion, including options for the test to be completed online, if an extra payment was required should an individual have to re-take the test and whether drivers were exempt had they completed the same or similar course with another local authority. It was confirmed that the test was paper based at present and that this would continue to ensure driver engagement. The Licensing Manager explained that individuals would be required to complete the test with the only exception to not doing so being that the test had been completed with the same service provider – Personnel Checks. It was noted that individuals would be offered the opportunity for a free-re-test should it be required.

Committee Members agreed that 3 yearly Safeguarding Awareness Training be implemented for all existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators and welcomed the proposal to formalise the training by appointing Personnel Checks.

Resolved –

- (a) To note the proposals for Safeguarding Awareness Training for all new applicants and 3 yearly Safeguarding Awareness 'Refresher' Training for all existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators.
- (b) To note the responses received to the consultation with all current licence holders.
- (c) Approve Personnel Checks as the external training provider for the Safeguarding Awareness Training for new applicants and 3 yearly Safeguarding 'Refresher' Training for existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators.
- (d) Approve that all new applicants for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver or Operator licence must undertake the Safeguarding Training prior to a licence being granted.
- (e) Approve that all existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver and Operator licence holders must undertake the Safeguarding Awareness 'Refresher' Training within 1 year from 2nd September 2019.

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- (f) Approve that where any existing Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver or Operator licence holder has not undertaken the Safeguarding 'Refresher' Training by 31st August 2020, their licence will be suspended until they attend the training and produce a valid certificate as confirmation.

34. Members Attendance Record 2018/19

Resolved – That details of the Members Attendance Record 2018/19 be noted.

35. Date of Next Meeting - 5th June 2019

The date of the next meeting scheduled meeting was confirmed as 5th June 2019.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.34 pm)