

REGULATORY PANEL

WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2020 AT 2.02PM

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Bradley, Brown, Ms Ellis-Williams, Mallinson J (as substitute for Councillor Collier) Meller, Morton, Nedved, Shepherd, Miss Sherriff, Dr Tickner and Tinnion.

OFFICERS: Assistant Solicitor
Regulatory Services Manager
Licensing Manager

RP.06/20 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Mrs Ellis-Williams be appointed as Chair of the Regulatory Panel for the municipal year 2020/21

RESOLVED – That Councillor Mrs Ellis-Williams be appointed as Chair of the Regulatory Panel for the municipal year 2020/21. Councillor Mrs Ellis-Williams thereupon took the Chair.

RP.07/20 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Morton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Regulatory Panel for the municipal year 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Morton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Regulatory Panel for the municipal year 2020/21.

Councillor Mrs Ellis-Williams thereupon took the Chair.

RP.08/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf on Councillor Collier.

RP.09/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

RP.10/20 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and the items of business in Part B be dealt with when the public and press were excluded.

RP.11/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 be agreed.

RP.12/20 COVID 19 – ISSUES RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

The Licensing Manager submitted report GD.19/20 which gave an overview of the work which had been undertaken to address Covid 19 issues in order to continue the provision of service to existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence holders.

The Licensing Manager reported that Carlisle City Council licenced 330 drivers who worked in the hackney carriage and private hire industry. Whilst there had been significant downturn in activity as result of the Covid 19 crisis, hackney carriage and private hire vehicles remained a vital form of transport for many. Dealing with the 'every day' licensing issues had provided practical challenges for licensing staff who had to work remotely. However, the service had been prioritised to ensure that all existing licence holders continued to receive a timely service to enable them to continue work if they had chosen to. She added that relevant guidance had been produced to assist Licensing Authority by HM Government, the Local Government Association and the Institute of Licensing.

The Licensing Manager detailed the work that the Licensing Team had undertaken to continue the administration of licences including the changes to Disclosure and Barring Service Checks, GP Medicals and MOTs and Certificate of Compliances.

The Licensing Manager explained that the taxi and private hire trade had been identified as raised risk of death by the Office of National Statistics. The National Private Hire and Taxi Monthly were mounting a campaign in favour of the installation of as many protective screens as possible into licensed saloon private hire vehicles, taxis, and licensed minibuses to help lower the transmission of the virus to protect passengers and drivers.

Carlisle City Council supported the installation of protective screens in licensed vehicles provided they were fit for purpose and were of a safe standard. There was no requirement to make amendments to licence conditions, but licence holders were required to obtain permission for installation. A guidance note had been produced, a copy of which had been circulated to the Panel, to ensure that licence holders were able to fit screens in their vehicles without unnecessary delay.

In response to Members' questions the Licensing Manager confirmed the following:

- no new Disclosing and Barring applications could be processed at this time;
- Licensing Services did not hold information on licensed drivers who had been affected by Covid 19;
- the Council garage was closed and unable to undertake Certificates of Compliance (COC). Vehicles that were due their annual COC had been directed to local garages for MOTs, no MOTs outstanding;
- applications for the installation of screens were processed as a priority. The Council issued an installation agreement provided that the screen had been installed by an authorised provider and met with safety and cleaning requirements;
- licence holders had been directed to government schemes for financial support;
- any screens installed had to have insurance approval;
- the Licensing Team were being proactive in keeping licence holders informed of all guidance through email or letter. The guidance issued included information on screens and how to clean and sanitise vehicles. The correspondence was logged in the Council's licensing system;
- the Council could not limit the number of licences it issued unless a request was made from the Trade that the market was over saturated. Any request was subject to a full consultation.
- licences were not renewed without a copy of the applicant's medical self-certification;
- any requirement for screens in school transport would be a decision for Government and Cumbria County Council.

The Chair thanked the Licensing Team for their continued work in ensuring that licensed drivers and their customers were being protected in such difficult times.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

[The meeting ended at 2.31pm]