
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2024

Present: Councillors M Bunday (Chair), Kenny, Whitbread, Windle, Moulton and Cooper

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Blatchford, Noon and Laurent

1. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillors Mrs Blatchford, Laurent and Noon were noted.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Blatchford be elected as Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Committee meetings held on 14 June 2023 and 31 January 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **TAXI POLICY UPDATES**

The Committee considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Resident Services which outlined proposed updates to the Taxi Policy and recommended that the updated Taxi Policy be adopted.

Southampton City Council Officers Phil Bates the Service Manager Licensing, and Russell Hawkins, Senior Licensing Officer were in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Committee noted that four changes to the current Taxi Policy were proposed:

- The requirement for Hackney Carriages to have a working card machine
- The implementation of a drug testing policy
- The incorporation of the current Taxi Camera Policy into the main Taxi Policy
- The addition at 8.7 of the Private Hire Conditions to update the door sticker style

Requirement for Hackney Carriages to have a working card machine.

In discussion the Committee noted that many customers now want to pay by card, and that many drivers already use card machines in response to customer demand. The addition of this requirement to the licence conditions would ensure consistency for all Hackney Carriage customers. Through the taxi forum meetings Hackney Carriage trade representatives had requested a requirement to have a working card machine to combat instances of a minority of drivers using the lack of car machine to refuse trips. This requirement had been piloted for six months for all Hackney Carriages operating in the docks and had worked well. It had been identified that it was important for the wording, the customers who paid by card viewed on their bank statements, regarding

the financial transaction enabled the customer to identify the vehicle or driver or operator that took the payment.

It was proposed that section 13.1 of the Hackney Carriage Licence Policy and Conditions be amended to read as follows:

The vehicle must be equipped with a card payment terminal which can accept payment by credit/debit card, including contactless. The device must be connected, maintained and working at all times that vehicle is available for hire to ensure customers are able to pay by card. Customers that pay by card must be able to identify the vehicle or driver or registered limited company that took the payment on their bank statements. In the case of driver identification or vehicle identification, plate numbers or badge numbers must be included.

Drug Testing Policy

In discussion the Committee noted that the drug testing policy would provide officers with the mandate to arrange for drivers to take a drug screening test where there was sufficient cause and reason to believe that an existing licence holder may be using drugs. The local authority had a duty to protect public safety and was required to be sure that all taxi drivers were safe to drive. If a person needed to take medication for health reasons and that medication had been identified by the National Health Service as unsafe to drive while under the influence then that person would not be a fit and proper person to drive a taxi. A testing service would be procured from an appropriately licensed laboratory and the operational costs would be part of the business of enforcing the licences and the operational costs would be fully recoverable in the licensing fees so it would not increase the cost or burden on the Councils budget.

Incorporation of the Taxi Camera Policy into the main Taxi Policy

In discussion the committee noted that Department for Transport recommended that local authorities had single taxi policy therefore the current Taxi Camera Policy would be incorporated as an appendix to the main Taxi Policy.

The addition at 8.7 of the Private Hire Conditions to update the door sticker style

In discussion the Committee noted that this was a change to the sticker design that would make the door stickers look smarter and the change would be phased in gradually as and when the door stickers are replaced.

RESOLVED: that the updated Taxi Policy as detailed in the report at Appendix 1 would be adopted subject to the amendment of section 13.1 of the Hackney Carriage Licence Policy and Conditions with the wording proposed at the meeting as outlined above

5. **GAMBLING ACT STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES**

The Committee considered the report of the Service Manager Licensing which sought approval to consult on the Draft Statement of Licensing Principles for the Gambling Act of 2005 for a period of 3 months.

Phil Bates, the Service Manager Licensing, was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Committee.

In discussion the Committee noted that the Gambling Commission required the policy to be reviewed at least every three years and the current policy needed to be reviewed by January 2025. It was important to make sure that the safeguarding measures applied were not so onerous on licence holders that gambling activity would be driven underground where it could not be monitored.

The Committee noted that applications for a Large Casino would be considered by the Licensing Committee and a review of the statement of licensing principles would be included in the application process to inform the determination of the specific conditions to be applied to the licence.

RESOLVED that the proposed Statement of Licensing Principles for the Gambling Act 2005 was approved to go out to consultation for a period of three months