

Minutes of meeting of the REGULATORY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 25 JULY 2022 at 6.35 pm

- Present:** Councillor McLean (Chair)  
Councillors Andrews, A Carr, Clarke, Cryer-Whitehead, Lancaster, Legg, Rolfe and Wallis (Vice-Chair)
- Officers:** N Allen (Head of Regulatory Services), A Wearing (Strategic Lead - Transport), J Agar (Taxi Licensing Lead), M Tiley (Lawyer - Litigation) and J Crighton (Democratic Services Officer)
- Also Present:** 16 members of the public
- Apologies:** Councillors Exon (Vice-Chair) and McQuillan

**RC03            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**RC04            MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Regulatory Committee held on 9 February 2022 and the special meeting held on 18 May 2022, be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

**RC05            HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LIMIT, ELECTRIC / HYDROGEN VEHICLES AND CARBON NEUTRAL 2030**

The Committee considered a report on the hackney carriage vehicle limit, electric / hydrogen vehicles and Carbon Neutral 2030.

J Agar (Taxi Licensing Lead) informed the Committee that the Council currently had a limit of 137 on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences that it would grant each year.

The Committee, in June 2018, had set the limit following the completion of an unmet demand survey in September 2017. In order to maintain a limit an unmet demand survey should be conducted every three years. However, due to the pandemic, it had been decided not to review the hackney carriage limit until this year.

It was reported that, out of a fleet of 991, only 26 licenced vehicles were electrically powered (zero emissions / no exhaust), of which none were hackney carriages. In order for the Council to achieve its target to become carbon neutral by 2030, significant steps needed to be made especially as vehicles in Milton Keynes now only had a licensing life of ten years.

Council officers had engaged with the taxi and private hire trade outlining proposals to significantly reduce licenced petrol / diesel / hybrid vehicles in Milton Keynes by 2030.

The Committee heard from members the hackney carriage trade who, in summary, highlighted the following:

- (a) they had not been against electric vehicles, but to achieve the target by 2025 was too soon;
- (b) due to the financial impact of the pandemic, vehicle proprietors had limited funds to invest in new electric vehicles (zero emissions / no exhaust);
- (c) rapid charging facilities were not available at hackney carriage ranks; and
- (d) there was no demand for electric vehicles.

RESOLVED -

1. That an unmet demand survey be undertaken.
2. That the survey results and recommendations be reported back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

RC06

### **THIRD-PARTY ADVERTISING ON PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

The Committee considered a report on third-party advertising on private hire vehicles.

J Agar (Tax Licensing Lead) informed the Committee that, in 2019, the Council had approved third-party (commercial) advertising on hackney carriage vehicles.

In February 2022, private hire operator VIA requested the Council to permit private hire vehicles to carry third-party (commercial) advertising to generate further income in order to meet escalating drivers and vehicle costs.

The Committee noted that the current taxi policy stated that private hire operators could only display Council approved door signage on private hire vehicles they operated, which included the following:

- (a) it is a private hire vehicle;
- (b) the name of the operator; and

- (c) the vehicle must be pre-booked.

It was reported that private hire vehicles, like hackney carriage vehicles, be allowed to display third-party (commercial) advertising in order to generate additional income, however, advertising would not:

- (a) replace current Council approved door signage;
- (b) detract from the lawful purpose of the vehicle; or
- (c) be offensive or obscene in anyway.

RESOLVED -

1. That an amendment to Section H (Advertising on Licensed Vehicles) of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions document (Part 2) be approved to allow third-party (commercial) advertising on private hire vehicles, as outlined in Annex A to the report.
2. That Cabinet recommend that Section 11.6 (Signage, Advertising and Livery) of the Taxi Policy (Part 1) be amended to allow third-party (commercial) advertising on private hire vehicles, as outlined in Annex B to the report.
3. That an advert be placed in the local newspaper under Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 proposing an advertising application and compliance fee of £102.00 for private hire vehicles.
4. That, following any objections, Cabinet be recommended to approve the new fee.

**RC07**

#### **PROPOSED VARIATION OF FARES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES**

The Committee considered a report on the proposed variation of fares for Hackney Carriages.

J Agar (Taxi Licensing Lead) informed the Committee that the Milton Keynes Taxi Association had formally requested that the current Table of Fares for Hackney Carriages be increased by 20% on Tariff 1 (day) and 10% on Tariff 2 (night) due to the increases in the cost of living and fuel; and fares had not been increased since 2012.

It was noted that a public consultation had been completed and there had not been any formal objections.

RESOLVED -

1. That the proposal to increase Hackney Carriage fares, attached at Annex C to the report, be noted.

2. That it also be noted that there were no formal objections to the proposed schedule of Hackney Carriage fares which was advertised, in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
3. That the proposed increase in Hackney Carriage fares be referred to the executive for immediate implementation.

## **RC08**

### **VEHICLE AGE POLICY AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note on the Vehicle Age Policy and wheelchair accessible vehicles.

J Agar (Taxi Licensing Lead) informed the Committee that a private hire operation had requested that the Council allow wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed between six and ten years.

It was noted that the operator specialised in home to school contracts and had had difficulty in sourcing such vehicles that were less than six years old and, if the request be approved, it would reduce service problems for special needs children in Milton Keynes.

The Committee, at its meeting on 13 December 2017, had stated that it was committed to improving taxi services to those with disabilities in Milton Keynes.

The Committee noted that the amendment to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions document (Part 2) had been implemented on 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Briefing Note be noted.
2. That wheelchair accessible vehicles be included in future unmet demand surveys.

## **RC09**

### **CONDITIONING DRIVER LICENCES**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note on conditioning driver licences.

J Agar (Taxi Licensing Lead) informed the Committee that a private hire operator had formally requested:

- (a) the requirement for their drivers to take the topographical element (route knowledge) of the Council's driver assessment procedure be removed; and
- (b) the Council condition their drivers that they can only complete contracted work (home to school).

It was noted that the particular operator specialised in contract work with local authorities / schools and transported special needs children and, if the request be approved, it would enable to recruit additional drivers and meet customer needs.

Taking into account the nature of work undertaken by the particular operator, Council officers considered the exemption (specifically in regard to 'route knowledge' only) would not compromise public safety.

The Committee noted that the amendment to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions document (Part 2) had been implemented on 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED -

That the Briefing Note be noted.

**RC10**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Regulatory Committee would be held on Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 6.35 pm or on conclusion of the Licensing Committee, whichever is the later.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.25 PM