
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

LICENSING COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 13 November 2019 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Councillor M. Chapman-Allen (Chairman)	Cllr T. Kiddell
Mr K. Martin (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr R. F. W. Brame	Mr P. Morton
Mr M. P. Brindle	Miss T. Taylor
Mr T. R. Carter	

In Attendance

Donna Hall	- Licensing & Business Support Manager
Heather Lawson	- Licensing Team Leader (Shared)
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer BDC)
Ruth Tudge	- Democratic Services Officer

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8/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9/19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowes, Dowling and Dale.

10/19 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

12/19 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

None.

13/19 DRAFT TAXI LICENSING POLICY

The Licensing Team Leader, Heather Lawson, presented the report to the Members emphasising it was a draft document and outlined the specific changes to the previous Policy.

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The main topics that triggered discussion were:

- Changes to the sections regarding types of vehicles, age limits, emission standards and electric vehicles
- Wheelchair access and disability adaptations to vehicles to support this
- CCTV within vehicles, conditions and standards
- Pushchairs, babies and children and the legal requirements
- Tinted Windows
- E-hailing
- English tests and qualifications and the requirement to be able to read and write in English

There followed an in depth discussion on all of the above with particular attention to the Wheelchair access information. The draft Policy suggested that all Hackney Carriages taxis should eventually be adapted for wheelchair access and Members required further clarity on this point. There were marked differences between different types of wheelchairs, access and public requirements. Some disabilities required the customer to remain in the wheelchair at all times so would need the room to manoeuvre and access for the wheelchair, with a ramp to enter the vehicle and security fixings inside the cab itself. Whilst other customers may need the wheelchair for assistance with walking but could get in and out of the wheelchair and into the cab by themselves and under those circumstances the wheelchair could be folded and put into the boot.

It also raised the question of training to ensure the drivers were competent in the securing of the wheelchair within the vehicle, and the cost of the training would more than likely be borne by the driver which would be an additional cost. Some drivers were self-employed which would possibly price them out of the market. Members discussed the possibility of having a small percentage of vehicles with wheelchair access rather than a whole fleet. The cost implications for drivers to adapt cars for wheelchair access and, in addition, meet the requirements for emission standards was felt possibly too much for taxi drivers to pay with insufficient time to achieve the standards which may be required.

The Chairman suggested if it was a percentage of drivers that were wheelchair accessible and trained, it could be published on the Breckland Council website and in the Breckland Magazine so customers were aware how to contact the drivers. It was also felt consultation with the relevant disabled access groups and users should be carried out to find the possible requirements at this time in such a rural area compared to large cities and towns, along with consultations with the trade.

The Licensing Business and Support Manager, Donna Hall asked the Committee to make a decision on what they thought the requirements should be regarding wheelchair access, whether it should be all taxis or a percentage. Members agreed it should be a percentage of Hackney Carriages should be wheelchair accessible but this needs further consideration and Members also asked for clarity on the different types of wheelchair access before the policy went out to consultation.

Members also felt that E-hailing needed more research and clarity in the content of the Policy. It was felt that E-hailing is in the very early stages

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and if Breckland approach this right it could be a pioneering Council in the adoption of E-hailing.

It was agreed there should be an introduction of an English test to ensure drivers could not only communicate with passengers but for a basic health and safety issue should there be any accidents or health emergencies.

Members felt that further consideration be given to the draft policy before it was sent out for consultation, with particular attention to the points raised above.

RESOLVED that:

The Licensing Committee recommend amendments to the draft policy and return to a future meeting before it is published for consultation.

14/19 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on Wednesday, 8 January 2020 were duly noted.

N.B. Subsequent to the meeting, the above meeting date was postponed and will now take place at 10am, Tuesday 28 January 2020, in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE.

The meeting closed at 13:10.

CHAIRMAN