

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Taxis Committee  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

**Present:**

Councillor A Hopwood (Chair)  
Councillor K Lewis (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors M Aston, R Body, B Challenor, R Collins, P Drake, D Harley and W Sullivan

**Officers:**

S Smith – Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement), N Slym – Assistant Team Manager (Both Directorate of Public Realm), I Grosvenor – Finance Manager, R Hinett – Principal Accountancy Assistant, T Holder – Solicitor and K Buckle - Democratic Services Officer (All Directorate of Finance and Legal).

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55. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I Bevan and E Lawrence.

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56. **Appointment of Substitute Members**

It was reported that Councillors R Collins and W Sullivan had been appointed as substitute Members for Councillors I Bevan and E Lawrence respectively, for this meeting of the Committee only.

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57. **Declarations of interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter considered at the meeting.

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58. **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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59. **Change in Order of Business**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was:

**Resolved**

That the order of business be varied, and the agenda items considered in the order set out in the minutes below.

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60. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**Resolved**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual(s) as defined under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

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61. **Application for grant of a Private Hire Driver's Licence – IA**

A report of the Acting Director of Public Realm was submitted to consider the grant of a private hire driver's licence to Mr IA.

Mr IA together with his father Mr MI and his Solicitor Mr Schiller were in attendance at the meeting.

The Committee were informed that this Application had been considered by Members in July 2021 when the application had been deferred pending clarification and further information to be requested from West Midlands Police on Mr IA's Disclosure Barring Service Police Report. The information requested had been received shortly before the meeting of the Committee, however Mr Schiller agreed to proceed with the application on behalf of Mr IA.

It was noted that the document received from West Midlands Police outlined intelligence in relation to Mr IA but failed to provide information in relation to Mr IA's possible links to local gang members.

Mr Schiller confirmed that Mr IA had no direct involvement with any gang, however he knew people who knew people that knew gang members and Mr IA confirmed that he was aware that should any material come to light that demonstrated that this was not the case, any licence granted to him could be reviewed by the Committee on that basis.



Mr Schiller on behalf of Mr IA made representations in relation to each intelligence log summary and responded to questions asked by the Committee.

The Committee were informed that there were no further matters pending that needed to be brought to their attention.

All parties then withdrew from the meeting to enable the Committee to determine the application.

### **Resolved**

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, and as reported at the meeting, a Private Hire Driver's Licence be granted to Mr IA for a period of twelve months.

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At this juncture the meeting resumed in public session

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### 62. **Revision of Licence Fees**

A report of the Acting Director of Public Realm was submitted on the revision of fees for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licences administered by the Committee.



The Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) presented the report in detail referring Members to paragraphs of specific importance.

The Finance Manager outlined the proposed budget for 2022/23 and confirmed that the projected budget had been calculated with the assumption that there would be no increase to fees and charges, whilst an ongoing review of the impact of Covid-19 had upon trade continued.

It was noted that over the last three year cycle a deficit of £62k had been forecasted, excluding 2021/2022, during that period income levels had been consistent but had been adversely affected by the impact of Covid 19 lockdowns during the first quarter of 2021/22. The draft budget for 2022/23 reflected the costs and income budgets set in 2018/19 and therefore efficiencies had been generated to offset the rise in inflation over the four-year period and were outlined in the report submitted.

The Finance Manager referred to specific detail in relation to the administration of the Licensing Service, including cost.

In responding to a question from Councillor R Body, the Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) stated that Covid-19 had affected the Service in terms of a reduction in the number of Licences issued during 2020, with there being a shift from applications for Hackney Carriage to Private Hire Driver's Licences.

In responding to a further question in relation to Operator fees, the Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) referred to the Wolverhampton model advising that they had reduced their fees, however they had over 12,000 drivers and were in a position to do so and increasing the number of Operators would not address issues in relation to trade income.

The Finance Manager also reported that Vehicle Testing income had reduced due to a number of Taxi Drivers purchasing new vehicles.

### **Resolved**

That no action be taken to increase the fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences administered by the Committee, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

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### 63. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

#### **Resolved**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual(s) as defined under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.



64. **Review of a Private Hire Driver's Licence – Mr MA**

A report of the Acting Director of Public Realm was submitted to consider the review of a private hire driver's licence in respect of Mr MA.

Mr MA was in attendance at the meeting and explained the circumstances surrounding the convictions. It was noted that the incidents had occurred whilst Mr MA was on holiday and not whilst he was undertaking his duties as a private hire driver.

Mr MA responded to questions asked by the Committee and confirmed that there were no further matters pending that needed to be brought to the Committee's attention.

**Resolved**

That following consideration of the information contained in the report and presented at the meeting the Committee determined that no further action be taken.

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The meeting ended at 7.05 pm.

CHAIR

