

LICENSING COMMITTEE
28/02/2023 at 9.30 am



Present: Councillor Surjan (Chair)
Councillors Azad, Byrne, Hamblett, Harrison, S Hussain,
McLaren, Nasheen, Shuttleworth and Wilkinson

Also in Attendance:

Laila Chowdhury	Constitutional Services
Alan Evans	Group Solicitor - Environment
Susan Loftus	Licensing Projects and Hearing Officer
Nicola Lord	Principal Licensing Officer
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
Cosgrove, C. Gloster, Goodwin and Sheldon.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st
November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

6 **LICENSING UPDATE REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report from the Principal Licensing
Officer, which provided Members with an update on Licensing
matters.

Members were advised of the two strategic objectives that
related to Licensing which were:

- To work with businesses to ensure they were licensed
and compliant.
- To ensure safe passenger journeys, in safe licensed
vehicles with safe licensed drivers

It was noted that there had been one further application
considered by the Licensing Premises Panel since the previous
Committee meeting. Officers continued to work with the Private
Hire and Hackney Carriage trade to ensure effective
communication and consultation took place. Officers continued

to hold trade forum meetings which included Members of the Licensing Committee and representatives of Moorhey Street Testing Station.



Members were provided with details of the number of existing licences currently in force. The Licensing Driver Panel continued to sit monthly to hear applications for taxi licences, renewal or reviews of existing licences where offences, misconduct or any other relevant matter arises. Since the last Committee Hearing, there had been a total of 10 determinations by the Panel which were broken down to members and set out in section 2.6 of the report. There had been no emergency delegated decisions taken by the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager since the last Committee.

Members had previously been updated on GM Minimum Licensing Standards and had approved changes to the Taxi Licensing Policy to encompass recommendations as a result of the consultation on those standards, which were originally intended to dovetail with the GM Clean Air Plan. The Clean Air Plan was currently paused. The plan for Greater Manchester was sent to the Government in July this year, with the suggestion for a non-charging zone with funding. The Government had now responded to request further evidence which will not be considered until July 2023.

Members had previously approved a temporary extension to licensed vehicles, whereby they could continue to be licensed beyond the maximum age limit so as to benefit from any funding released by the Government linked with the Clean Air Scheme. GM Authorities were still waiting for a decision on the proposed plan and any funding which may become available. However, the temporary extensions to vehicles were due to come to an end on 30th June 2023.

Members were asked to consider a further extension for vehicles in order that they continue to be licensed pending a final decision being made by the Government. It was the view of the Officers that no further extensions should be granted, as no assurances funds had been received for non-compliant vehicles would be released and there were concerns that older vehicles continued to breach emission standards and added to pollution levels.

There continued to be regular changes to legislation and guidance affecting licensing together with consultations the summaries of which were detailed below:

- Awaiting consultation on the Governments levelling up agenda to review to the number of taxi licensing authorities;
- Awaiting release of the Governments Taxi and Private Hire best practice guidance following consultation earlier this year, it was due to be released before Christmas 2022, however it had been delayed and no release date was known;

- Continuing to work with GM colleagues to deliver minimum licensing standards.



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Projects underway or due to start in the coming months included:

- The revised Statement of Fitness and Suitability was approved by the Committee in November 2022,
- Assessing the impact of the GM clean air plan on the licensing policy
- Reviewing hackney carriage ranks, licence release policy and unmet demand.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. No further extension be granted to the temporary extensions to vehicles past 30th June 2023.

7

FRONT PLATES REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Principal Licensing Officer, which requested approval for revisions to existing standards in relation to vehicle front plates.

The Committee noted that Members were provided information which related to anti-social behaviour and trade requests to remove front plates at the Committee meeting in November 2022. At that time, Members were asked to consider a proposal to reduce the size of the front plates that were currently in use, in order to mitigate some of the anti-social behaviour shown towards licensed vehicles which were easily identifiable.

The Licensing Authority had been working with the trade on issues surrounding anti-social behaviour and associated vehicle attacks. The trade were asked to report matters to Greater Manchester Police and then to feed that information into the online reporting tool to better inform policy decisions going forward, particularly in respect of the request to remove front plates.

It was noted that there was insufficient data to warrant a request for the removal of front plates and was therefore suggested that a smaller front plate be approved for use. A summary of anti-social behaviour reports submitted since the facility was put in place in March 2022 was included at point 2.4 of the report. The proposed templates for the revised front plates for both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles were attached at Appendix 10.1 to the report.

Members had previously raised concerns over the impact of reducing the size of the plates on visually impaired vehicle users. As a result of those concerns, an Initial Assessment was completed to ascertain whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was required, with the assistance of the Corporate Policy Lead Officer which was attached at Appendix 10.2 of the report. The outcome of the assessment was that an EIA was not

required as the proposal was unlikely to disproportionately affect any groups. In addition, the requirements would still meet the GM Minimum Licensing Standards which already had a GM wide Equality Impact Assessment in place.



RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The proposed templates for the revised front plates for both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles attached at Appendix 10.1 of the report be approved.

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 10.15 am