

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 4th July, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor B Selby in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, R Downes, J Dunn,
B Flynn, B Gettings, M Harland, G Hyde,
A Khan, A Garthwaite, S McKenna and
J Pryor

14 Chair's opening Comments

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Oliver Corcoran, a pupil from Ralph Thoresby High School who was in attendance to gain a greater understanding of council decision making and local democracy.

15 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

16 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no late items identified where it was considered necessary to exclude the press or public from the meeting due to the nature of the business to be considered.

17 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

18 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests made at the meeting.

19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: C Townsley and G Wilkinson.

20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th May 2017, were accepted as a true and correct record.

21 Matters Arising

There were no issues raised under matters arising.

22 OLEV Grants for Electric Vehicle Charge Points

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 1st August, 2017

The Director of Resources and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the award that had been made by OLEV to support the delivery of Electric Vehicle Charge points in the West Yorkshire region

The Project Manager, Resources & Housing presented the report and responded to Members questions and queries.

Members were informed that West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) had secured £1.98m of Government capital funding to support an increase in ultra-low emission electric taxi and private hire operation on local roads. Eighty-eight dedicated taxi and private hire charge points (thirty three in the Leeds area) would be installed at key public transport and taxi operation sites across West Yorkshire following the Combined Authority's successful bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicle's Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Taxi Scheme.

It was reported that key sites for taxi charge points identified in the application included Leeds Train Station, Bradford Forster Square and numerous bus stations/interchange locations where taxi/private hire vehicles frequent. There was also potential to provide funding towards installation of charge points at private operators depots in line with prescribed criteria being met.

Members noted that Leeds City Council would lead on engagement and communications with the trade, with plans for a launch event to be determined. The intention is to provide information on EV charge points aligned to information from the trade on electric vehicles, their use and the benefits economically and environmentally from their adoption. The project team would liaise with industry experts to deliver this event with licensing services fully involved in the planning and the promotion of the event. Information will also be provided on the potential funding that may be made available to operators for installation of charge points for fleet use.

It was the general view of Members that initiative was welcomed.

One Member of the Committee spoke about her own experience of running an electric vehicle. She explained that she had the vehicle for a relatively short period of time but the operating costs appeared to be more economical than a petrol vehicle, the car was normally recharged at home overnight but additional rapid charging was available through a national charging network at a reasonable monthly cost. Long journeys had to be planned due to the limitations of the battery.

The Project Manager said that a typical budget electric vehicle could achieve around 120 miles on one charge which was possibly not enough for daily taxi usage. There were vehicles on the market which could achieve in excess of 300 miles on one charge but these vehicles were expensive and demand was relatively low. It was suggested that as battery technology progressed the average electric vehicle may be

able to achieve 300 miles per charge, this could happen as early as 2020 leading to an increase in demand and reducing vehicle prices.

Responding to a question on the cost and installation of an electric charging unit, it was reported that costs ranged from £15,000 to £30,000 depending on the proximity to the power supply/grid.

Commenting on future engagement plans the Chair said it was his understanding that the City Council was to host a “Greenfleet Event” which would provide an opportunity for the taxi and private hire trade to meet with electric vehicle suppliers to view and discuss the latest models which had been brought to market.

The Chair queried if Members of the Committee could attend this event.

In responding the project Manager said that an invitation to attend the “Greenfleet Event” would be extended to all Members of the Licensing Committee

RESOLVED – To note:

- (i) The information regarding West Yorkshire Combined Authorities (WYCA) securing and management of the OLEV grant.
- (ii) The outline plans for delivery of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charge Points across the region.
- (iii) The opportunity for operators to provide expressions of interest in working with WYCA to secure potential grants installation of EV Charge Points for use by Private Hire and Taxi vehicles.
- (iv) That an invitation to attend the “Greenfleet Event” be extended to all Members of the Licensing Committee

23 Proposed Project to Harmonise Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Conditions across West Yorkshire

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of a project to harmonise Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Conditions across the West Yorkshire region.

In providing background to the proposed project, the Executive Officer, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing reported that in 2015 officers from the five West Yorkshire Taxi and Private Hire Licensing teams and York, and the Chairs of the Licensing Committees (or equivalents) met to collaborate and share good practice on licensing and enforcement with a view to maintaining and improving passenger safety, particularly in light of the safeguarding issues that had arisen in a number of towns and cities in the UK.

Members were informed that since 2015, Leeds City Council had strengthened its own taxi and private hire licensing functions and had introduced new policies, including a strengthened convictions criteria policy and a safeguarding training requirement for all drivers and operators. The neighbouring authorities had also taken steps to improve or update their policies and conditions.

It was the view of the West Yorkshire & York taxi and private hire licensing group that cross-border working could not be done in isolation. The group had agreed that the collaboration approach would be more effective if the authorities were to undertake a project to align their policies and conditions, especially relating to passenger safety and vehicle emissions. The group had identified six areas where the authorities could or should align their policies so that the conditions were the same:

- CCTV in vehicles;
- Convictions policy;
- Vehicle specifications (especially vehicle emissions);
- Driver training;
- Information sharing between authorities; and
- Effective cross-border enforcement.

In the discussing that ensued Members were of the view that greater harmonisation of the vehicle and driver conditions across the West Yorkshire Region should be supported.

A number of Members expressed the view that Leeds had done some very good work in strengthening policies and introducing new ones, along with safeguarding training requirements. It was suggested that this work should not be compromised as a consequence of cross border harmonisation work.

In responding officers reported that some good work was also being done in other local authorities and the intention was learn from others with a view to adopting best practice.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report by noted
- (ii) To endorse the suggested way forward
- (iii) To support the priority areas for harmonising policies and conditions as identified in section 3 of the submitted report

24 Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Training Review - Responses to Consultation

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report which provided the responses received to the consultation on driver training. The

report also sought the views of Members on the next steps of the review.

Appended to the report were copies of the following appendices:

- Completed survey's - (Appendix No. 2 referred)
- Responses provided by email – (Appendix No. 3 referred)

The Executive Officer, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing reported that Appendix No. 1 (Driver Training Survey – Summary) had been omitted from the report and would be circulated to the Committee following the conclusion of the meeting.

Addressing the report the Executive Officer, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing spoke in detail about the proposed next step of the review and sought the views of Members in exploring the following:

- Baseline all West Yorkshire & York (WY&Y) in house and contracted training provision (may also involve the project leader of the WY&Y 'harmonisation' project group as highlighted in a separate report to this Committee);
- Site visits to learn from modular training procurement, provision, contract management, e.g. Liverpool, which had 5 recognised training providers who each provided all of the required training courses;
- Assessment of the financial impact of having applicants pay the training fees directly to a training provider, not the council, (Section 4.4.2 of the submitted report referred);
- Opportunity for the council to put forward a traded training function to be included on the list of training providers; and
- Opportunity for a framework contract for accredited driver training across the West Yorkshire Combined Authority area;

In the discussion that followed Members welcomed the suggested proposals.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To support the proposed next steps as referred to above and included in paragraph 3.7 of the submitted report
- (iii) That Appendix No.1 (Driver Training Survey – Summary) be circulated to all Members of the Committee

25 Licensing Committee Work Programme

Members considered the contents of the Licensing Committee Work Programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED – To approve the contents of the Licensing Committee Work Programme for 2017/18

26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 1st August 2017 at 10.00am in the Civic Hall, Leeds.