

Licensing Committee

Monday, 17th July, 2023

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Karen Ashley (Chair), Councillor Timothy Pearman (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Juma Begum, Sharon Harvey, Chris Holz, Anthony Lovell, Kerrie Miles and Monica Stringfellow

Also Present:

Councillor Imran Altaf

Officers:

Vanessa Brown and Dave Etheridge

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Emma Marshall and Salmon Akbar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee of 20th March 2023 were presented to Members.

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on the 20th March 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no registered public speakers.

Chair

5. STREET TRADING - REVIEW OF DESIGNATION OF STREETS

The Principle Licencing Officer, Worcester Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to seek members approval to advertise a proposal to designate all streets in the Borough as consent streets for the purposes of controlling street trading.

Officers detailed to Members that the Street trading policy was due for a review, however, before that could take place Members would have to redesignate the streets of the Borough to include any new streets since the previous policy had been adopted. Officers further detailed that an additional line would be added to the designations to ensure that as new developments were completed, and new streets were constructed they would be covered under the policy.

The current policy designated a number of prohibited steets as outlined on page 22 of the Public Reports Pack. Members were asked to decide whether they wanted to retain some of those streets, add additional prohibited streets or amend the list. Officers explained to Members that the recommendation was to make all streets "consent streets", therefore, individuals would be able to apply for consent for any street and each application would be considered on its own merit.

Officers highlighted to members the timescales involved in redesignating the streets and detailed to Members the process of consultations and ratification at full Council. An updated Street Trading policy would be drafted and brought before Members of the Licencing Parent Committee and both the new designations and policy would come into effect on 1st September 2024.

Officers clarified the following points after questions from Members.

- That there was no daily rate for street trading licences only an annual one and there was no minimum period of time to apply to trade.
- That although an individual could apply for consent to trade if the prohibited status was lifted, all relevant consultees which included Ward Members would be informed of the application and would have opportunity to object.

Members then debated the report.

Members saw the Merits of Removing all the designations and therefore giving more freedom to those who wish to apply for consent and not having a blanket refusal for the prohibited streets, however, Members wished to retain some of the prohibited streets.

Councillor Harvey proposed an Alternative Recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Baker that the prohibited designation was removed for all the streets with the exception of the following Streets;

- Alvechurch Highway
- Alcester Highway
- Bromsgrove Highway
- Coventry Highway
- Redditch Ringway
- Warwick Highway

On being put to a vote it was

RESOLVED that

- **Officers were authorised to publish notice of the Council's intention to pass resolutions which would take effect on 1st September 2024 and would rescind all existing designations of streets under Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and designate all streets in the Borough (as existing at the time of the making of the resolution and in the future) as consent streets, with the exception of the following streets which are to be designated as prohibited streets:**
 - I. **Alvechurch Highway**
 - II. **Alcester Highway**
 - III. **Bromsgrove Highway**
 - IV. **Coventry Highway**
 - V. **Redditch Ringway**
 - VI. **Warwick Highway**
- **Officers were authorised to serve a copy of the notice on the Chief Officer of Police and the highway authority for the area.**

6. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE TESTING AT CROSSGATES DEPOT

The Principle Licencing Officer, Worcester Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report on the vehicle testing and capacity at Crossgates Depot.

The Licencing Officer detailed that prior to 2009 Taxi safety inspections could be carried out at a number of trusted garages, however, due to poor results during routine quality checks, Members decided that all taxi safety checks would be performed by the Councils own Vehicle Engineers at the Crossgates Depot.

Drivers expressed to members that they were unable to get a timeslot their vehicle safety inspection, Members then raised the concern for the Work programme at the Licencing Committee of 20th March 2023.

The Licencing Officer detailed that when Crossgates was contacted, they supplied the information detailed on page 44 of the Public Reports Pack, which outlined that a number of timeslots which were set aside for Vehicle Safety Inspections went unused each month.

Officers further detailed that the times and number of slots available per day were detailed on page 44 of the Public Reports Pack, with 35 appointment spots each week made available for safety inspections. Two of the 7 daily appointments were reserved for re-tests, however, from 3rd July 2023 one of those appointments was made available for full tests instead.

Officers clarified the following points after questions from Members.

- Officers were only supplied with the total number of unused timeslots each month for a 6 month period, there was no further information regarding which timeslots were left unused.
- That the safety inspection was approximately 30 minutes in duration.
- That the current cost of the taxi safety Inspection at Crossgates was £54.85, Officers further clarified that fees and charges were set by Members at the full Council meeting each year.
- That Crossgates also performed the MOTs and safety inspections on all the Council's vehicle fleet.
- The return period for vehicles that had been inspected and failed in which the retest would be free was 24 hours.

Members discussed the possibility of the timeslot being related to Friday prayer or school pickup/drop-off time, Officers had not been able to clarify any further, the information supplied by Crossgates depot had been included in its entirety in the report.

Members expressed the opinion that the timescale for a driver to get their vehicle retested without incurring an additional fee should be raised to 7 days. As it would be difficult for a driver to book into a garage to get the necessary work done and return to Crossgates in 24hours.

After discussion from Members, the Licencing Officer agreed to investigate further and try to identify whether there were specific

times or days which went unbooked. Officers further agreed to work with the Crossgates depot to see whether some additional or more favourable timeslots could be identified by rearranging workloads, such as the maintenance on the Councils Vehicle fleet.

On being put to a vote

RESOLVED that

the report on the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle testing at Crossgates Depot be noted.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Joe Baker requested that a report be added to the work programme which looked at outsourcing MOT services to a more competitive market and to review fees and the retest schedule.

Councillor Baker clarified that he would further ask that the report identified an average cost for an MOT, which the Licencing Committee could use to make a recommendation to Full Council to adjust the charge to drivers.

The Meeting commenced at 7.01 pm
and closed at 7.51 pm