

MINUTE
of
SPECIAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 17 September 2024.

Present:

Councillor Paul Edlin (Chair)
Provost Mary Montague

Councillor Andrew Morrison

Councillor Edlin in the Chair

Attending:

Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement); Brian Kilpatrick, Civic Government Enforcement Officer; and Victoria Harkness, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Mr Savio D'Souza (My Disability Plus), Mr Paul McDonald (Eastwood Mearns Taxis), Mr James Kyle (Scottish Taxi Federation), Mr John Paul Duffy (Scottish Private Hire Association) and Mr Brian Leca (Taxi Operator).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

948. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE POLICY

949. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 5th December 2023 (Page 693, Item 678 refers), the committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer (Legal and Procurement) on the response to the consultation regarding potential changes to the Council's current Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) policy and to recommend proposed changes to the policy following such responses.

There was heard verbal submissions from several stakeholders from both the taxi industry and disability rights communities, in which there was a consensus that the proposed changes to the council's current WAV policy could potentially deter new drivers from taking up the role due to the financial effects of the proposed changes, as well as forcing existing drivers into retirement and thus having an overall adverse impact on the availability of taxis for the public at large including disabled persons, whether wheelchair users or otherwise.

Although there was an appreciation for the need for WAVs within the taxiing community it was noted that no exact figures relating to the demand for WAVs within the council area currently

existed that would reasonably allow determination of the need for the proposed changes in policy.

It was highlighted within the discussions that financial incentives such as waiving licence fees may be a way to incentivise new and existing drivers to take up or remain in the industry and enable them to comply with any future policy changes.

The Committee thanked all attendees who contributed to the meeting and agreed to an adjournment to consider all matters discussed.

On reconvening, the Committee, having taken account of all the positions cited, agreed to:-

- (a) approve the definition of WAV as outlined in the report;
- (b) remove the age requirements, subject to annual inspection, for all vehicles meeting the WAV definition, including Hackney cabs;
- (c) recommend that no fee is charged for new and renewal applications for WAVs as defined;
- (d) instruct the Chief Legal Officer to report the committee's recommendation regarding the proposed removal of fees for WAV applications to Cabinet for final decision;
- (e) adopt the amended policy for an initial trial period of 18 months, and to thereafter review its practical effect at that time and in the interim period to commission stakeholders to gather empirical evidence on the demand for and usage of WAVs;
- (f) reject the proposal to amend the current policy in respect to WAVs to require all new applications for taxi or private hire car licences and any subsequent substitutions to relate to vehicles which are wheelchair accessible; and to
- (g) reject the proposal to require that all vehicles identified as replacements in a substitution request and which are capable of carrying more than four passengers to be wheelchair accessible.