

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee held at the Town Hall, Reigate on Tuesday 16 January 2018, at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors: Rosemary Absalom, Derek Allcard, Liam Ascough, Natalie Bramhall, Keith Foreman, Bob Harper, Frank Kelly, Steve Kulka, Andy Lynch, David Pay, Barbara Thomson and Christopher Whinney

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Ashford.

Note: Councillor Ashford was appointed to the Committee, following publication of the agenda, to take up the vacant seat created by the resignation of Mr Simon Rickman.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

8. ADOPTION OF A SURREY WIDE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS POLICY AND THE INTRODUCTION OF SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR LICENSED DRIVERS AND APPLICANTS

The Committee received a report proposing changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The aim of the changes was to strengthen the policy and in particular the protection of vulnerable children and adults by introducing consistent standards across Surrey.

To this end, the report also proposed that all drivers should be required to complete a course on safeguarding children, to help them in recognising any signs of potential abuse and to know what to do if they have concerns.

The case of a driver in another area of the country was cited. Having taken the safeguarding course he engaged a young teenager in conversation to find out where she was going because he was worried about her travelling alone.

The information volunteered by the young girl made him concerned for her safety, so he did not drop her off but instead handed her into the care of a responsible adult and reported the matter to the Police who subsequently investigated the person she was supposed to be meeting.

The annexes to the report set out the outcomes of the consultation exercise undertaken across the County and it was noted that Reigate and Banstead had the highest response rates.

Members sought clarity on a number of points, including the following:

- how the online training course would be administered and what controls could be put in place to monitor that tests were being completed by the drivers rather than anyone else;
- whether relevant information obtained through the driver application process was shared with Surrey County Council, which operated the school transport service;
- what checks, comparable to DBS, were undertaken for foreign nationals;
- what exceptional circumstances might apply in the case of applicants with a past conviction for violence; and
- what was the percentage of successful appeals by drivers who had been refused a licence;

The Committee commented upon the relatively low percentages in favour of the changes from consultees working in the trade, which was disappointing. It was accepted that drivers may not think it was their responsibility to protect vulnerable people, but they were in a unique position to be able to recognise potential signs of risk and to act accordingly.

The hope was that, over time, the new measures would make drivers aware of the important role they could play in safeguarding.

With this in mind, the Committee expressed its wish to see the safeguarding training extended to cover all operators, managers and call-handlers in the future.

RECOMMENDED that the Surrey Wide Criminal Conviction Policy as set out in Annex 6 of the report presented be adopted.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That safeguarding training is implemented and made a requirement for all existing and new licensed taxi and private hire drivers.
- (2) That the Head of Service with responsibility for licensing is authorised to make minor changes and adjustments to the Conviction Policy and amend relevant parts of the Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policies in

consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee.

9. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm