



development of the Policy through extensive consultation. He informed Members that copies of the consultation responses were in the Licensing Unit if any of them wished to see them.

Through this newly updated Policy it would improve the administration, the committee workings and give the trade more assistance which had been an overriding factor.

The Government had tasked the Law Commission to review legislation on hackney carriage and private hire licensing. An interim statement had been issued. The Law Commission are due to issue a final report and produce a draft bill for parliament. Members raised the issue of training when the bill was produced. The Head of Environmental Health assured Members that training would be forthcoming as and when the bill was published.

Within in the revised Policy there were proposed changes:

Assessment of driver fitness and propriety (driving and medical records, past criminal history (if any), knowledge test, person conduct etc).

Under this area there were some important changes relating to the drivers' licences which used to be given for one year at a time, but would now be issued on a three yearly basis and still be reviewed at any time if there was any cause for concern. The driver would then come before the Committee.

During the consultation it was noted that the drivers were not satisfied with the location and costs of the medical assessments. If a driver was fit and well then the current service provided more than they needed. However, if the driver had complex medical issues then the current medical assessments were a benefit as the examiner would contact consultants and other medical professions to gather all the information regarding their health issues.

It was now proposed that there would be a two tier system:

The first option would be a medical examination available at a local provider. This would be a straightforward examination with a reduced fee. However, any additional enquiries would incur further cost. The second option would be as existing with a higher fee but which would include any further enquiries. The taxi drivers could choose which of these options they preferred.

Members raised the issue regarding the alcohol and drug testing for new applicants and when in the day this testing would take place. Members were concerned that if was later in the day the alcohol content may have reduced significantly. The Head of Environmental Health agreed to take these concerns on board when a provider was being sourced.

Members questioned what would happen if a driver failed the alcohol and drug test. The Head of Environmental Health explained that medical confirmation would be sought and they would be told that they were not fit and to come back at a later date.

A discussion ensued regarding how long after the initial failed test would a prospective driver have to wait. It was agreed that a six month period should elapse before the driver could reapply.

Members enquired as to whether random alcohol and drug tests would be undertaken on taxi drivers. The Head of Environmental Health explained that these tests would only happen if there was intelligence indicating that there may be issues with an individual. He explained that there had to be an element of trust as potentially owner drivers were putting their livelihoods at risk and operators would not want any of their drivers to jeopardise their business.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that there would be independent annual checks on the DVLA licences for taxi drivers. These were being introduced as drivers licences would now be issued for three years. Drivers licences will be checked via the DVLA to check if any of the drivers have received any points on their licence during this period.

With regard to the dress code in the policy it was now more clear as to what was and what was not acceptable.

Consultation had taken place regarding wheelchair accessibility for taxis. The existing policy states that only taxis that had access for side loading of wheelchairs were permitted. the new policy states that rear loaders will be permitted as well.

The Exceptional Vehicles criteria was removed from the new policy. The test for the vehicles under the new policy was against a VOSA approved vehicle standard that required a comprehensive assessment of the vehicle.

The Head of Environmental Health raised the issue that if Council agreed the Policy when would the committee want the changes implemented with immediate effect. He explained that some of the changes were quite easy to implement and would have a positive impact on the taxi drivers immediately other changes for example the fees and charges could not be brought in until 1 April 2014. Members were in favour of implementing the changes as soon as possible for each area if the Council agreed the Policy.

RESOLVED:

- 1) It was agreed that an amendment would be taken to Council on 15 January 2014 regarding the alcohol and drug testing. The Members were in agreement that if a new applicant failed an alcohol or drug test they would not be allowed to apply for a licence for six months. If an existing driver failed an alcohol or drug test then they would have their licence revoked for six months.
- 2) Councillor Bennett would move this amendment at Council on 15 January using agreed wording for the Policy which the Head of Environmental Health would draft.

- 3) It was agreed that if the new Policy was accepted at Council changes that could be made immediately would be done and the following changes would be implemented as and when other procedures had been agreed.

That the Briefing Note be noted.

**43. Briefing Note – Home Office Consultation on Abolition of Personal Licences**

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Environmental Health (Enclosure 6.1 – 6.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Briefing Note be noted.

**44. Briefing Note – Government Consultation on Proposals for Regulated Entertainment**

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Environmental Health (Enclosure 7.1 – 7.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Briefing Note be noted.

**45. Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2, Part 1, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).



**CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2014 AT 9.30 A.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 2**

**46. Briefing Note – Outcome of a Recent Appeal to the Decision of the Committee**

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Briefing Note of the Head of Environmental Health (Enclosure 9.1 – 9.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Members agreed that the outcome of this hearing was good for the Council. That the Committee had been seen to be undertaking their duties and had acted accordingly.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that within the new policy the Exceptional Vehicle meetings would rarely be required as there was a new procedure in place which removed reliance on only the age and mileage of the vehicle. Members were in approval of this.

RESOLVED:

That the Briefing Note be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.35am

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CHAIRMAN