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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Regulatory Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA and remote attendance on Tuesday, 8th November, 2022 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Tony Easson (Chairman)

County Councillors: John Crook, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Jane Lucas, Alistair Neill, Sue Riley, Dale Rooke, Jackie Strong, Ann Webb and Armand Watts

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Jones	Head of Public Protection
Linda O'Gorman	Principal Licensing Officer
Leigh Beach	Licensing Officer
Ben Davies	Solicitor
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor Lisa Dymock

1. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th May 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as an accurate record.

3. Taxi and Private Hire Policy

The Principal Licensing Officer presented the Taxi and Private Hire Policy report. The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the requirements of the Department for Transport (DfT) Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards and Welsh Government's Harmonisation Guidance on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales. Both necessitate a review of Monmouthshire's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy and Conditions.

Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

- A Member asked how overseas criminal checks are undertaken if there is no link to the EU data files. It was responded that it depends on the person's previous country of residence. There is guidance and information from the Home Office and on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) website. The Embassy would be contacted regarding a Certificate of Good Conduct or similar. In response to a question, it was confirmed that Licensing is not involved in the costs of checks which is the responsibility of the DBS. It was suggested that, depending of the European country concerned, there could be financial discrimination for holders of European passports. It was responded that difficulties in paying the costs is a matter for the DBS. The importance of carrying out the correct checks was emphasised. Officers will undertake further research and

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make enquiries with the DBS to see if there are any arrangements to recompense overseas persons unable to pay costs. The Head of Public Protection suggested that information on the cost differential between a UK and Overseas worker would be useful. The above information to be researched during the consultation period.

- A Member requested that drivers are fully tested to ensure safety on the road, preferably a test designed for taxi drivers. It was agreed this point would be considered during the consultation period and the view passed to Welsh Government.
- A Member asked about cross-border enforcement referring to Monmouthshire being on the Wales/England border. It was clarified that the policy stems from the DfT (covers England and Wales). The Welsh element is devolved to Wales, but this will follow the DfT policy and more joint working will occur.

As per the report recommendations, Members noted the content of the report and the need to review our existing requirements, policies, and conditions of licence in order to comply with Statutory Standards and Welsh Government Guidance.

Upon being put to the vote, we resolved to approve the consultation process with the licensed trade on the proposed changes during the period 14th November – 30th December 2022, and agree to a further report being submitted to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 31st January 2023 for consideration.

4. To note the date and time of the next meeting as 13th December 2022 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at 2.28 pm