

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE (NON LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)
3.00PM 6 FEBRUARY 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors McGregor (Chair), Pickett (Opposition Spokesperson), Bagaeen, Davis, Gauge, Hewitt, Sheard, Sykes and Thomson

Apologies: Councillors Cattell and Lyons

PART ONE

17 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Alexander was present in substitution for Councillor O'Quinn.

(b) Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were no declarations of interests in matters listed on the agenda.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

1.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items on the agenda.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

18.1 RESOLVED – The minutes of the Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003 Functions) Meeting held on 10 October 2024 were agreed.

19 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

19.1 The chair informed the committee that the first Licensing Summit had taken place in January 2025, and thanks was given to all. The summit opened questions across the city by acting as a pre-engagement prior to a full consultation to be started after annual council in May 2025. The chair also considered that the nighttime economy of the city, including the music scene required protecting and reinvigorating. The committee were reminded of the new, and extensive, policy to protect women. The chair noted that the city was generally a safe space.

20 CALLOVER

20.1 The Democratic Services Officer stated the items on the agenda and the following were called for discussion by the committee:

- Item 16: Taxis & Private Hire Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Consultation

21 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

21.1 There was none for this meeting.

22 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

22.1 There was none for this meeting.

23 TAXIS & PRIVATE HIRE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE CONSULTATION

23.1 The Hackney Carriage Officer introduced the report to the committee.

Answers to committee Member questions

23.2 Councillor Pickett was informed that there were no clear records of wheelchair access. Demand was monitored by talking to operators and it was noted that demand had dropped off since summer 2024. The number of accessible vehicles was unlikely to drop, and no accessible vehicles were being asked to be cut. The chair confirmed that reviews were regular.

23.3 Councillor Bagaeen was informed that the 20% accessible vehicles was agreed at a recent meeting, and one operator had suggested the percentage. The 15 years agreement for accessible electric vehicles was suggested as the electric vehicles were considered to require less servicing and should last longer than petrol vehicles. Currently after 10 years vehicles are checked every 6 months, and this will be the same for electric vehicles. Currently 45% of Hackney carriages are accessible and 20% of private vehicles.

23.4 Councillor Hewitt was informed that there were two major operators in the city and all operators should provide wheelchair access.

23.5 Councillor Sykes was informed that the total number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the city was not known. The chair noted the fleet was surveyed every 5 years. It was noted the 2010 and 2022 acts ensured drivers would assist wheelchair users with no extra charge. Those not complying could be prosecuted.

23.6 Councillor Sheard was informed that the proposed changes were for both Hackney and Private vehicles. It was noted that the issue of taxis being in bus lanes was an ongoing issue for the enforcement team. The councillor was also informed that taxis records were regularly looked at.

23.7 Councillor Pickett was informed that the wheelchair accessible vehicles were trained and reviewed, after three years they would be re-trained.

- 23.8 Councillor Davis was informed that if drivers refused wheelchair users there was legislation and policy to which drivers were accountable. It was noted that accessibility groups have been consulted.
- 23.9 Councillor Bagaeen was informed that the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles would be looked at under the demand survey. It was noted that larger vehicles were often used for school runs in the morning and afternoon and this meant the vehicles would not be available for wheelchair users.

Vote

23.10 A vote was taken, and the committee voted unanimously to agree the recommendations.

23.11 RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That Members agree the following:
- 2.2 Remove the requirement for Operators to have 20% of the fleet wheelchair accessible when their fleet reaches 100 vehicles.
- 2.3 To be considered suitable to hold a Brighton & Hove Operator Licence, operators must provide wheelchair accessible services to disabled passengers in wheelchairs.
- 2.4 Allow proprietors with a compulsory wheelchair accessible vehicle who are unable to drive a wheelchair vehicle due to a medical or physical reason to transfer their compulsory wheelchair accessible vehicle and then be issued new plate for a Compulsory Fully Electric, Plug in Hybrid or Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle.
- 2.5 Wheelchair accessible vehicles may exceed the normal age limit for a maximum of 4 years until 1st April 2027.
- 2.6 Fully electric vehicles to be licensed up to 15 years from date of first registration.

24 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

24.1 There were no requests for any items to be referred to full council.

The meeting concluded at 3.42pm

Signed Chairman

Dated this _____ day of _____