

MEETING:	General Licensing Regulatory Board
DATE:	Wednesday 20 December 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Green (Chair), Booker, Bowser, Cherryholme, Denton, Eastwood, Ennis OBE, Hunt, Lodge, Moyes, Osborne, Sheard, Shepherd, Stowe, Tattersall, White and P. Wright

22 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest from Members in respect of items on the agenda.

23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Councillor Wright referred to the last Board meeting, where he had queried the number of accidents involving taxis that had been reported in a year.

Councillor Green informed Members of the sad passing of Councillor Wraith. Members noted Councillor Wraith's exemplary chairing skills as the former Chair of the Licensing Regulatory Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Licensing Regulatory Board meeting held on 6 September 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

24 Licensing and Enforcement Update

Members were provided with an overview of the enforcement work that had recently been undertaken by Licensing Officers.

It was noted that a high proportion of taxi drivers from outside of the borough continued to come into Barnsley town centre collecting fares; approximately 32,000 taxi licenses had been issued by Wolverhampton Council. It was necessary to convey the message that Licensing Enforcement Officers would continue to undertake periodic vehicle checks. Councillor Green requested that if Members observed any taxis other than Hackney Carriage taxis parked in the taxi ranks, to provide the licence plate details to D Bailey, Senior Licensing Officer.

D Bailey commented that there was no evidence to suggest that the out of town taxi drivers were operating illegally and no complaints had been received from members of the public. The Veezu taxi firm had operating centres across the country and brought approximately 20 out of town drivers into Barnsley predominately on

Friday and Saturday evenings. There was currently a lack of taxi drivers to meet the public demand at busy times. Enforcement operations in Barnsley town centre would continue in collaboration with Licensing Enforcement Officers from other authorities.

On 4 November 2023 Licensing Enforcement Officers alongside South Yorkshire Police Officers and Wolverhampton Licensing Authority Officers had taken part in a night time operation which focused on Barnsley town centre and the drivers and vehicles that work in the night time economy. Councillor Green, Chair of the Licensing Regulatory Board, was also in attendance. In total, 10 licensed vehicles and drivers had been inspected on the night, all of which were licenced by other local authorities:-

- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Calderdale.
- 4 vehicles and drivers licensed by Wolverhampton.
- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Sheffield.
- 1 vehicle and driver licensed by Leeds.
- 1 vehicle and driver licensed by Chesterfield.

During the operation, Wolverhampton Licensing Officers had suspended 3 of their licensed vehicles for issues in relation to door signage. Checks were made to ensure that all of the drivers and vehicles inspected could provide evidence of customer bookings.

On 10 November 2023 a day time operation had been undertaken which had focused on Barnsley town centre and the drivers and vehicles that work in the day time economy. As part of the operation, a total of 12 licensed vehicles and drivers had been inspected, all of which were found to be compliant and were Barnsley licensed drivers.

Members were advised of a further night time operation undertaken on 2 December 2023 by Licensing Enforcement Officers alongside Officers from South Yorkshire Police, Wolverhampton, Leeds and Sheffield Local Authorities which focused on Barnsley town centre and the drivers and vehicles that work in the night time economy. Councillor Green, Chair of the Licensing Regulatory Board, was also in attendance. The operation had been focused on vehicles and drivers that were licensed by Licensing Authorities outside of Barnsley. Licensing Officers from all the authorities in attendance had undertaken checks of their respective licensed vehicles and drivers, and had undertaken enforcement action where necessary. Checks were made to ensure that all drivers inspected could provide evidence of customer bookings. In total, 19 vehicles had been inspected on the night, all of which were licensed by other local authorities:-

- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Calderdale
- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Wolverhampton
- 5 vehicles and drivers licensed by Sheffield
- 1 vehicle and driver licensed by Leeds
- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Chesterfield
- 2 vehicles and drivers licensed by Wakefield
- 4 vehicles and drivers licensed by Rotherham
- 1 vehicle and driver licensed by Bradford

Proactive joint enforcement operations would continue to be regularly undertaken on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and vehicles. The principal consideration being for public safety.

RESOLVED that Members supported Officers and encouraged Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and operators to comply with the conditions of their licence and continue to keep their vehicles as safe as possible for both drivers and customers at all times.

Chair