



Sandwell

Metropolitan Borough Council

**Annual Report of the
former Licensing
(Miscellaneous)
Committee
2016/17**

Foreword

My name is Councillor Mohammed Rouf and I chaired the former Licensing (Miscellaneous) Committee for the municipal year 2016/17. The Committee considered 132 individual matters relating to the grant or review of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing throughout the year covering a wide variety of issues.

The Committee worked with the Taxi Licensing Office to ensure that all laws, conditions and obligations in respect of regulation and public safety were complied with. As always, many things impact on this type of licensing, in particular the work around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) had increased, with the Council now offering the opportunity for drivers and operators to undertake training on this important issue.

In addition, the Council had also begun work to strengthen the policies and guidelines governing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing in the borough and was currently consulting interested parties in respect of these proposed changes. These developments were taking place against the backdrop of increasing technological advancements, which were significantly changing the Licensing landscape.

All matters were considered against the licensing regimes primary function, to protect to public. In order to maintain the integrity of the service, it was essential that members of the public could feel confident and safe when using Private Hire Vehicles and Hackney Carriages in Sandwell. I am confident that the decisions made by the Committee made travelling in a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle a safe and comfortable experience with competent drivers who fulfil the Council's essential requirements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank fellow Members of the Council and staff involved in the licensing process for their work throughout the year.



Cllr Mohammed Rouf
Chair of Licensing (Miscellaneous)
Committee 2016/17

1. The former Licensing (Miscellaneous) Committee

The former Licensing (Miscellaneous) Committee was established by Council to determine all matters in relation to the Council's powers and duties under the following Acts and Regulations:-

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847;
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976;
- House to House Collections Act 1939;
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;
- The Police, Factories etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916;
- Consumer Credit Act 1974;
- Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975;
- Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1972.

Membership of the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Committee was:-

- Cllr Mohammed Rouf (Chair)
- Cllr Bob Price (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr Olwen Jones
- Cllr Sharon Davies
- Cllr Keith Davies
- Cllr Susan Eaves
- Cllr Danny Millard

The Committee received officer support from Licensing Managers, Democratic Services and Legal Services.

The key benefits of the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Committee were:-

- the protection of public health and safety;
- the establishment of professional and respected hackney carriage and private hire trades.

2. Business

During the year the Committee considered 132 reports regarding the grant or renewal of a licence or a review of an existing licence. All the reports considered were Private Hire or Hackney Carriage matters.

Date	Granted	Renewed	Suspended	Revoked	Refused	Adjourned/ Deferred	Warned	No Action	Total
17/05/2016	3	1	2			1			7
07/06/2016	3	1			1	1			6
28/06/2016			1	1		4	1		7
12/07/2016	5	2							7
09/08/2016			3	1	2				6
23/08/2016		3	4			1			8
06/09/2016	3		4			1			8
20/09/2016	2		2		2	2			8
04/10/2016	1				2	1		1	5
18/10/2016	5		2			1			8
01/11/2016	6		1						7
15/11/2016	1				4	1			6
13/12/2016	1				2	2			5
24/01/2017		3	2			1			6
07/02/2017	2		2			1			5
21/02/2017		1	1		1	1	2		6
07/03/2017	1	2	1			3			7
21/03/2017					1				1
04/04/2017			2		2	2			6
18/04/2017		1			1	2			4
02/05/2017	1				1	2			4
16/05/2017	1				1	3			5
Total	35	14	27	2	20	30	3	1	132

3. Commentary on the work of the Committee

New Policies

A full review of the existing policies and guidelines in respect of Driver, Vehicle and Operator licences was currently taking place.

Delegations to Officers

During the year the Taxi Licensing Manager made the following delegated decisions which resulted in fewer reports being considered by the Committee:-

9 – Driver Applications refused due to the applicant failing to pass the Knowledge Test within three attempts.

13 – Warning Letters issued due to failing to declare minor road traffic endorsements on application or within the designated time period.

8 – Licensed drivers had their licence suspended with immediate effect on the grounds of public safety due to having committed or being investigated for criminal offences of a serious nature.

6 – Drivers had their licence suspended with immediate effect on the grounds of public safety due to having a serious medical condition which rendered them unfit to continue to drive a licensed vehicle.

4. The Committee's Main Achievements

The Committee's key achievements during the year were:-

- continuing to uphold and ensure public safety;
- contributing to the review of the Licensing Policy and Guidelines Committee.

5. Contribution to Scorecard Priorities

The Licensing process contributes to the Scorecard priority of "Great Prospects" by making opportunities available for employment locally. The service indirectly supports within great prospects by investing in business, people and jobs.

Through the provision of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licensing service, the Licensing Section is committed to contributing to the Scorecard Priority of "Great Place".

6. Training and Development

Training had been provided to all members of the Committee on the following topics:-

- Member Conduct/Licensing Process.
- Relevant legislation.
- Case law.
- Declarations of interest.

7. Conclusion

The Committee carried out its role with a view to ensuring the public were kept safe from harm. In making its decisions, the Committee put this perspective at the forefront of its decision making providing further assurance to the public in the knowledge that the Council viewed the safety of its citizens as paramount in carrying out this function.

Members and officers are constantly reviewing Council Policy and delegations to reduce committee time and further improve the level of service offered to licence holders.