

LICENSING COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2022

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing Committee of Flintshire County Council held remotely on Wednesday, 13 July 2022

PRESENT: Councillors: Glyn Banks Marion Bateman, Geoff Collett, Steve Copple, Rob Davies, Mared Eastwood, Chrissy Gee, Richard Lloyd, Ryan McKeown, Carolyn Preece and David Richardson

CONTRIBUTORS: Team Manager (Licensing & Pest Control) and Senior Solicitor

IN ATTENDANCE: Community and Business Protection Manager and Democratic Services Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chair for the Committee. It was explained that in the absence of a Chair, the appointed Vice-Chair would be required to chair this meeting in advance of a Chair being formally appointed after the next County Council meeting.

Councillor Richard Lloyd's proposal for Councillor Ryan McKeown to be appointed Vice-Chair was seconded by Councillor Carolyn Preece.

Councillor Glyn Banks' proposal for Councillor Rob Davies was seconded by Councillor David Richardson.

Councillor Mared Eastwood's proposal for Councillor Marion Bateman was seconded by Councillor Chrissy Gee. Councillor Bateman subsequently asked for her name to be withdrawn.

On being put to the vote, the nomination for Councillor Rob Davies to be appointed Vice-Chair was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rob Davies be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

(From this point, Councillor Davies chaired the remainder of the meeting)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During the debate on agenda item 5 (minute number 4), Councillors Marion Bateman and Chrissy Gee declared a personal interest as members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Lloyd and Rob Davies.

As proposed by Councillor Marion Bateman, it was agreed that a letter would be sent to Tony Sharps, the former long-standing Chairman of the Committee, to thank him for his service.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and that a letter of thanks be sent to the former Chairman of the Committee.

4. **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS IN PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

The Team Manager (Licensing & Pest Control) presented a report to consider a proposed change to the Conditions of Licence for Private Hire Vehicles in respect of fire extinguishers.

Whilst the conditions currently stipulated that vehicles must carry a serviced dry powder fire extinguisher weighing at least 2kg, representations from a licensed Private Hire Operator on reducing the size to 1kg would bring the Council in line with requirements of neighbouring authorities. Advice sought from the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service stated that a 1 litre extinguisher might be sufficient for private hire saloon type vehicles and black cabs, and that a 2kg extinguisher would be more appropriate for larger private hire vehicles carrying 9 or more passengers. The Team Manager explained that as Council licensed vehicles carried up to 8 people, or 9 including the driver, the advice could be interpreted either way.

The Committee was asked to consider the request received and the advice given by the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service. The four suggested options were to consider whether the requirement to carry a fire extinguisher should be proportionate to the capacity of the vehicle or whether a specific size should apply to all vehicles. The Committee was also asked to consider amending the conditions to ensure that fire extinguishers were suitably secured within vehicles.

In response to a query from Councillor Mared Eastwood, the Team Manager was unable to clarify the frequency that fire extinguishers were deployed but pointed out that carrying such equipment was an appropriate safety measure in any type of workplace.

Councillor Glyn Banks proposed Recommendation 1.1 (a minimum 1kg fire extinguisher for vehicles carrying 4 passengers and a 2kg extinguisher for vehicles carrying 5-8 passengers) which he felt accorded with the advice given by the Fire & Rescue Service, along with Recommendation 2. He was seconded by Councillor Carolyn Preece who said that this would bring the Council in line with conditions of nearby authorities as set out in the report.

The Team Manager clarified that Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 both appeared to align with the advice given by the Fire & Rescue Service. In response to comments from Councillor Richard Lloyd, she advised that 1.5kg fire extinguishers were often difficult to source. Following a question by Councillor Marion Bateman, she explained that the rationale to alter the conditions was to reduce the burden on the private hire community as some operators felt that a 2kg extinguisher was excessive in smaller capacity vehicles and that a change would give private hire companies with smaller cars the option to reduce to 1kg and also align the Council with other authorities.

Councillor Steve Cople spoke in support of the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Lloyd that the Council retain the current requirement to carry a minimum 2kg extinguisher in all vehicles (Recommendation 1.4). He was seconded by Councillor Bateman.

After further consideration, Councillor Banks withdrew his earlier proposal and indicated support for Recommendation 1.4. On being put to the vote, Recommendation 1.4 was carried.

During discussion on Recommendation 2, no specific wording was suggested as it was agreed that equipment should be suitably secured as appropriate within individual vehicles. This was moved and seconded by Councillors Bateman and Eastwood.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council keep the requirement to carry a minimum 2kg dry powder variety fire extinguisher in all vehicles; and
- (b) That the current conditions be amended to add that the fire extinguisher should be suitably secured within the vehicle.

5. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 10.50am)

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Chair