

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 10  
SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Present:**

Councillor Hutton (in the Chair)

Councillors

Mrs Callow JP  
Collett

Critchley  
Farrell

Hunter  
D Scott

R Scott  
Wilshaw

**In Attendance:**

Mrs Sharon Davies, Principal Licensing Solicitor  
Mr Chris Williams, Democratic Services Adviser

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

**2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 23 JULY 2019**

The Sub-Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 23 July 2019.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**3 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**Resolved:** That under Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the whole item, including the decisions referred to at Agenda item 4.

**4 TAXI SHARING SCHEME**

Following a period of consultation approved by the Sub-Committee at its 26 March 2019 meeting on the proposed amendments to the Blackpool Borough Council (Taxi Hire at Separate Fares) Scheme 1990 Taxi Sharing Scheme, it was noted that no comments had been received from Highways, Transport Policy or the Police, nor had any comments been received in response to the schemes advertisement in The Gazette on 1 August 2019.

Members reasoned that the proposal as presented was satisfactory and noted that no objections had been received.

**Resolved:**

1. To approve the Blackpool Borough Council (Taxi Hire at Separate Fares)(Variation) Scheme 2019.

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2. To delegate to the Head of Legal to seal the Order.

**5 PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER**

The Sub-Committee was informed of an existing driver who had given sufficient cause for concern as to be referred for consideration.

Members discussed the referral as appropriate.

(i) H.M (Existing driver)

Mr Ryan Ratcliffe, Licensing Officer, was in attendance and presented the Authority's case. The Sub-Committee was informed that the driver had been involved in an altercation with two female passengers following a routine journey. During the incident, it was alleged by a witness who had made a statement to the Police that HM had spat on one of the passengers and had punched the other passenger. The witness, who was in attendance, confirmed his version of events which matched the statement he had given to the Police following the incident.

Members noted that the driver had been before the Sub-Committee previously in October 2016 in relation to an incident under similar circumstances whereby he was alleged to have used threatening and abusive behaviour towards a member of the public whilst driving a licensed Hackney Carriage vehicle. On that occasion HM was issued with a Severe Warning Letter in relation to future conduct.

HM was in attendance and disputed the witness's version of events. He claimed that the two female occupants of the taxi at the time of the incident had been drinking and had verbally abused him with racial insults. He admitted to spitting in the face of one of the women but denied punching the other. He suggested that the women had refused to pay the full fare amount for their journey and there had been some confusion about the precise destination they wished to arrive at. He also claimed that the Police caution he received was for spitting only and added that he had shown the Police CCTV footage from inside his taxi which he claimed exonerated him of any physical violence despite being hit by one of the female passengers himself. However, the footage was not available for the Sub-Committee to view.

The Sub-Committee reasoned that it was likely that the driver had been racially abused by the passengers and whilst this was unacceptable and the situation HM found himself in was very difficult and emotional, his response, namely an assault in the form of spitting in the face of one of his passengers, was disproportionate and fell far short of the standards and conduct expected of a licensed driver. Inconsistencies in HM's version of events and a lack of evidence to support some of his claims were further compounded by the fact that he had failed to declare his Police caution to the Licensing Service.

**Resolved:**

To revoke the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle License with immediate effect in the interest of public safety as the driver was no longer a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

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Background papers: exempt

**6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 15 October 2019.

**Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 7.30 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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