

## The Cabinet

**27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 1.00 pm**  
**at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Eling (Chair);  
Councillors Carmichael, Costigan, Gavan,  
Hackett,  
D Hosell, Khatun, Moore, Shackleton and Trow.

**In attendance:** Councillors Ahmed, E M Giles, Hickey, P Hughes  
and Underhill.

### 89/18 **Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Ahmed declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 90/18 (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy Amendments) on the basis that he was a Birmingham Council taxi driver. Councillor Ahmed left the room during consideration of the item.

### **Strategic Items**

#### 90/18 **Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy Amendments (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC 18/06/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection sought approval to revise the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy.

The policy came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, however, further amendments were now sought as follows:-

**Online applications and renewal** – a move to online submission of applications, renewals and associated documentation through the Council's My Sandwell portal would enable an efficient service for both drivers and the Council. This would also involve moving to online submissions of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) applications;

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**Document Formatting** – to fully paginate the policy and insert a table of contents;

**Cashless payments** –to move to cashless payments to make more efficient use of officer time and to support the online application process;

**Non UK criminal record checks** – that vehicle registration plates were dated to match the duration of the vehicle licence with drivers asked to produce evidence of insurance at the point of their vehicle licence renewal. Failure to produce insurance documents would result in the vehicle licence not being renewed.

That the £50 fee be removed from the policy and enforcement action used to ensure licensed vehicles were appropriately insured.

**Drop-ins and appointments** – that the licensing office was provided with more flexibility to deal with interactions with drivers so to reduce waiting times;

**Vehicle written off following a collision** – the policy currently did not contain any provision which allowed vehicles that had been lawfully repaired after being written-off following a collision to be used as licensed vehicles. This position was not adopted in any other authority across the Black Country and resulted in a detrimental impact for Sandwell Licensed drivers, who were forced to buy a new vehicle even if their existing vehicle could be repaired.

It was proposed to allow the use of category S and N vehicles once they had passed both the MOT and Sandwell's vehicle TAXI test. Such vehicles must have been licenced with Sandwell prior to the category S or N status.

The proposed changes would come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

In response to questions raised by the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection confirmed that:-

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- during the process of renewing their licence, drivers would be expected to present cover notes which demonstrated their vehicle had been insured for the full period of their previous licence. Licenced Operators had also been made aware of their responsibility to ensure that all their drivers were insured appropriately at all times. In addition to this, vehicle insurance would be checked as part of regular multi-agency safety operations and the Council would act accordingly when made aware that a licence holders insurance had expired;
- in respect of ensuring the changes resulted in improved customer service, the Council was in the process of establishing key performance indicators for the service which would be monitored and scrutinised at Director and Cabinet Member level as well as continuing to engage in regular forum meetings with licence holders to enable feedback.

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Management Board welcomed the proposed improvements to the service which would reduce bureaucracy and address some of the concerns that existing drivers had identified.

**Resolved** that the amendments to the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy as set out in Appendix 1, be approved and implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

91/18

### **Draft Black Patch Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan – Authority to Consult (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC04/06/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment sought approval to undertake consultation on the Draft Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan with a wide range of stakeholders, businesses, residents and community groups during summer 2018 in order to assist in seeking a way forward for the future land uses in this area.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, the Cabinet were informed of issues affecting the area around Black Patch. Due to the demise of the housing stock and lack of recreational facilities, the area had degraded over time, lacking a focal point and attracting anti-social behaviour.

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The Allotments were also not being fully utilised attracting fly-tipping and vandalism. The area did not have a residential community except for a small area of homes at Avery Road and Murdock Road and the park had deteriorated through lack of investment, vandalism and traveller encroachment.

The land uses for this area were contained in the adopted Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (SAD DPD) which was adopted in 2012.

It allocated land at Kitchener Street and Boulton Road for employment uses and the park for Community Open Space. The Allotments were unallocated. Kitchener Street still remained vacant with no employment uses forthcoming. Land at Boulton Road was also undeveloped although currently had the benefit of a temporary planning permission for a Transit Site.

Due to the continual decline of the area, members had requested that the land uses in this area be reviewed with a focus on bringing forward a transformational change for housing development. However, the current land uses and policies contained in the statutory plan did not allow for residential development. The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD was currently under review. Any proposals received for residential use would be contrary to planning policy.

It was therefore proposed to prepare an Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan for Black Patch, which would set the vision for the future land uses in this area and consider residential development for sites at Kitchener Street and the Allotments.

In response to questions raised by the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment confirmed that:-

- no decision had been made as to when or how this land would be disposed of yet. The Masterplan had been prepared to ascertain the principal of residential on these sites. However, the Council would support the submission of a funding application to the West Midlands Combined Authority/Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Land and Property Investment Fund to bring forward development for housing, whether this would be from a private developer or the Council itself and if the terms of the funding could be met;

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- it was possible that restricting development due to constraints or diverting sewers to allow for a more developable site area could incur additional costs which may affect viability. However, the Council would work with developers to identify sources of funding that may assist in bridging the viability gap.

The Chair of Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board welcomed the proposals to combat the decline of this area and to create a new vibrant community centred around an improved park.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Draft Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan for Black Patch be approved as a basis for public consultation during summer 2018;
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods submit a further report on the results of the public consultation in due course.

92/18

### **Approval of Engagement and Acceptable Behaviour Protocol and Guidance (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC01/05/2018).**

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Core Council Services sought approval to the Engagement and Acceptable Behaviour Protocol and Guidance.

The Council aimed to ensure a consistently positive experience in its engagement with Council staff, residents, partners, stakeholders, with service providers and with councillors.

With changing demands, expectations and financial challenges facing the Council, it was recognised that ensuring and maintaining an effective conversation with Sandwell residents and its communities was vitally important.

The Council's success in delivering Sandwell's 2030 Vision, providing excellent services and supporting people relied upon Sandwell's residents and communities having the opportunity to

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engage with, influence and shape the outcomes that are delivered by the Council, its partners and other stakeholders.

The protocol set out five principles that would underpin and govern the Council's relationship and dealings with Sandwell's residents and its communities:

- **Principle one:**  
The Council is here to serve Sandwell's residents and the rich and diverse communities that are found in each of its six towns.
- **Principle two:**  
The Council will aim to deliver outcomes that residents and communities truly want.
- **Principle three:**  
Engagement is essential to achieving the right outcomes and building and maintaining public trust and confidence in the Council. The Council is a learning Council and is committed to continuous improvement.
- **Principle four:**  
Engagement means: -
  - listening to and understanding the needs and aspirations of Sandwell's residents and its communities;
  - Sandwell's residents and communities are empowered to participate in decisions and in the democratic process; and
  - supporting and responding positively, professionally and effectively to those that seek help, advice and/or assistance from the Council.
- **Principle five:**  
Sandwell residents and communities are encouraged to constructively challenge and question the Council in a fair, open and respectful manner.

The protocol detailed how Council staff would interact with Sandwell's residents and its communities, for example, in a respectful, open and honest manner. This approach was reciprocated by the vast majority of Sandwell's residents.

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The Council acknowledged that Sandwell's residents and communities had the right and ability to question and challenge the Council. The Council embraced the right to lawful, peaceful protest and the freedom of speech and expression that was enshrined in law. However, it was also recognised that residents expect that such rights should not be abused and that no one, whether a member of Council staff, another member of the public, Council service user or a councillor, should be subjected to unacceptable behaviour.

An emerging national trend over recent years was the increase in incidents of unreasonable behaviour, particularly concerning incidents involving social media against those in public office.

The protocol and guidance directly addressed the behaviour and actions of some members of the public that was considered to go beyond what the Council considered to be acceptable.

Unacceptable behaviour compromised how the Council wanted to engage with Sandwell residents and how the vast majority of residents wished to engage with the Council.

Unacceptable behaviour was an unwelcome distraction, wasted time and resources and undermined constructive discussion with those genuinely seeking to have an open and honest conversation with the Council.

Moreover, the Council had a duty of care not only to its staff but to other users of its services, its councillors and other members of the public more generally and so was required to take steps to effectively tackle unacceptable behaviour in all its forms.

The protocol and guidance defined the nature and scope of the unacceptable behaviour and the reasonable and proportionate steps the Council may take to address it.

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board commented that residents expected that such rights should not be abused and that no one, whether a member of Council staff, another member of the public, Council service user or a councillor, should be subjected to unacceptable behaviour.

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In addition, an emerging national trend over recent years had seen the increase in incidents of unreasonable behaviour, particularly concerning incidents involving social media against those in public office.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Core Council Services confirmed that the Protocol and Guidance reaffirmed the Council's commitment to openness, transparency and engagement with Sandwell residents and communities. The vast majority of residents had and saw a positive relationship with the Council, its staff and Councillors. Any positive relationship included the opportunity for healthy challenge, which the Council encouraged. However, the Protocol and Guidance recognised that not all exchanges and engagement with the Council, its officers and Councillors were appropriate, and the Guidance set out what steps may be taken to address such conduct. The Council believed that democratic function was not going to be best served by those considering or elected to public office being subjected to abuse or intimidation. The consultation and review being undertaken by the Committee of Standards in Public Life, which would be considering a range of issues, including the intimidation of Councillors, was therefore welcomed.

**Resolved** that the Engagement and Acceptable Behaviour Protocol and Guidance be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

93/18

### **Award of Contract for Mobile Working Platform (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC10/06/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Core Council Services sought approval to award the contract for the licensing and development of a mobile working platform to Kirona Solutions Limited for the period 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 for a total cost of £576,440.

The current contract for the provision and development of a mobile working platform was due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

It was now proposed to procure a new mobile working platform built upon two main elements:

1. to move the existing mobile working platform for Housing Repairs to a new improved platform;

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2. to procure a new solution that would enable mobile working within different service areas across the Council.

Over the past two years the Kirona solution had been developed for pest control, housing repairs and voids management and maintenance. Additional frontline service areas who would benefit from the use of mobile working in the next two years included:

- Housing Management
- Income Management
- Anti-social Behaviour
- Estate services and caretaking
- Housing Choice

The future use of the mobile working platform would support employees to deliver services 'out in the field' and work more effectively across divisional boundaries. There would be clear opportunities to:

- co-ordinate visits across multiple disciplines leading to a more streamlined approach for customers and reductions in duplicated work;
- enable officers to directly report issues whilst on estates or in residents' homes.

In response to questions raised by the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Core Council Services confirmed that the Council would continue to identify areas where digital mobile working could be introduced and, through the member development programme, work was ongoing to identify a system that could identify training and support requirements for members, ensuring they had the right ICT kit and access to information to enable them to undertake their role effectively.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods award the contract for the licensing and development of a mobile working platform to Kirona Solutions Limited for the period 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 for a total cost of £576,440;

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- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Director – Monitoring Officer execute any documents necessary to give effect to the award of contract and to sign any contract changes in relation to the purchase of additional licences or development days during the period of this contract.

94/18

### **Award of Contract for Cleaning Materials, Janitorial Hardware and Paper (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC02/06/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Core Council Services sought approval to award the use of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Framework to appoint Banner Group Ltd to provide the Council's cleaning materials, janitorial hardware and paper until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

The current contract expired on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018.

#### **Resolved: -**

- (1) that the Executive Director – Resources award the use of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Framework to appoint Banner Group Ltd to provide the Council's Cleaning Materials, Janitorial Hardware and Paper until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022;
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Executive Director – Resources enter into a call off agreement with Banner Group Ltd through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation framework;
- (3) that the Director – Monitoring Officer execute any documents necessary to give effect to Resolution (1) above.

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### **Provision of Annual Gas Safety Checks (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC03/05/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Housing sought approval to award the contract with Liberty Gas Group, Vinshire Plumbing & Heating Limited and Phoenix Gas Servicing Limited for the provision of annual gas safety checks for a contract period of three years, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

The Council was responsible for the risk and maintenance of gas appliances under Landlords responsibility which encompassed approximately 26,000 serviceable properties and over 60,000 gas fitments.

The Council was seeking to appoint three contractors to assist the Council's in-house Gas Section to undertake the Annual Gas Safety checks in Council properties, for a contract period of three years, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

The Chair of Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board welcomed the proposals and that two of the three contractors had local bases in Sandwell which reinforced the Council's commitment to using local suppliers where appropriate.

#### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Director – Housing and Communities award the contract with Liberty Gas Group, Vinshire Plumbing & Heating Limited and Phoenix Gas Servicing Limited for the provision of annual gas safety checks for a contract period of three years, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021;
- (2) that the Director – Monitoring Officer execute any documents necessary to give effect to Resolution (1) above.

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### **Supply of Kitchen Cabinet and Sundries (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC09/06/2018)**

The Cabinet Member for Housing sought approval to award a contract to Richmond Cabinet Co Ltd to supply kitchen units and sundries to the Council's Asset Management and Maintenance Supplies Section based at Roway Lane, Oldbury.

A procurement exercise in the form of a direct award was undertaken in compliance with the terms and conditions of the LHC framework K5 the supply of kitchen cabinets, worktops and associated products. Richmond Cabinet Co Ltd were the preferred supplier.

The proposed expenditure was £480,000 (£120,000 per annum) over the four-year period from 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2020.

#### **Resolved: -**

- (1) that the Director – Housing and Communities award the contract to supply kitchen cabinets and sundries to Richmond Cabinet Co Ltd for a four-year period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 for the sum of £480,000;
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Director – Monitoring Officer enter into a contract with Richmond Cabinet Co Ltd on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director – Housing and Communities.

#### **Business Item**

97/18

### **Implementation of Devolution Agreement - Adult Education Budget - Transfer of Powers to West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).**

The Leader sought approval for the implementation of a Devolution Agreement to enable full devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

WMCA's first Devolution Deal was formally agreed by the Combined Authority Shadow Board on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

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The agreement included the transfer of adult skills funding (Adult Education Budget - AEB) to the WMCA and the subsequent Order establishing the Combined Authority contained details of a number of Adult Education powers although it did not deal with the devolution of funding. In order to prepare for devolution, the Combined Authority was required to meet a series of readiness conditions including the transfer of the Secretary of State for Education's statutory duties in relation to the provision of further education for adults.

The principal purpose of AEB was to engage adults in learning that supported wider economic and social priorities. Devolution of AEB would only be applied within constituent member areas, and the indicative budget would be approximately £112m for 2019/20 based on current spend on residents.

The Order would set out the details of AEB functions that would be transferred to the WMCA with the agreement to devolve the budget. Department for Education (DfE) had been clear that the Order would not cover apprenticeships, adult offender learning or provision for people aged 16 -18.

Subject to these exceptions, it was proposed that the following functions contained in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCAL) 2009 would transfer to the WMCA in relation to constituent member areas:

- S86 – Duty to provide appropriate 19+ Further Education (not to include apprenticeships, prisoner education or traineeships)
- S87 – Duty to provide appropriate FE to 19+ learners who do not have certain specified qualifications
- S88 – Duty to ensure that provision is free for relevant learners who do not have certain specified qualifications

Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) were required to provide the Department for Education (DfE) with consent to the draft Order by 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to meet the necessary timescales to enable full devolution in 2019/20. The Order would be laid before Parliament by the end of July 2018 and made in November 2018 to meet the timescales to enable devolved arrangements to be in place for the 2019/20 academic year.

If the Order was not laid, the West Midlands Combined Authority would not receive AEB in 2019/20.

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For the first twelve months, WMCA had committed to maintaining current levels of funding to colleges and local authorities and to work collaboratively on improving the mix and balance of provision so that it better met local needs. Going forward, WMCA would expect to create additional flexibility in budgets through a more efficient use of funding, for example, minimising underspends; reducing sub-contracting; and potentially reducing spend with some out-of-area providers.

The work would include greater local and regional collaboration to map provision and identify gaps. The Regional Skills Plan would highlight the need for AEB to better reflect local priorities. This would also include a commitment to target more action at key areas of high youth unemployment and/or low skills.

This approach would be developed with local authorities to enable greater focusing and alignment of skills provision in areas of greatest need.

The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board had considered the report on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and whilst they welcomed the proposal, the Board was of the view that scrutiny should monitor the Special Educational Needs (SEN) split to ensure funding was reached where it was most needed. The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board was interested to see how resources were allocated when the AEB was devolved to the WMCA and whether the level of resources to the Council would alter over the first few years.

### **Resolved: -**

- (1) that the transfer of functions to West Midlands Combined Authority be approved to ensure the successful devolution of the Adult Education Budget in 2019;
- (2) that consent be given to West Midlands Combined Authority in making the Devolution Order to enable full devolution of the Adult Education Budget;
- (3) that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, approve the final draft Devolution Order referred to in (2) above;

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- (4) that a further report be submitted outlining how working positively with West Midlands Combined Authority impacts on closing the skills and employment gaps in the borough and how this enhances provision for adult education services delivered by the Council;
- (5) that the West Midlands Combined Authority note the following comments of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board:-
  - Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding would be split between the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Secretary of State, Scrutiny would need to monitor that SEN funding is reaching where it is needed and is not lost in the process;
  - Scrutiny Board welcomes the approach for greater local and regional collaboration to map provision and identify gaps to target funding more efficiently;
  - there was a concern that in the past there had been a lack of communication and awareness about adult education. There is a need to promote adult learning opportunities in Sandwell;
  - the Board endorse the devolution of Adult Education Budget and the transfer of power to WMCA.

98/18

### **Recommendations from the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Regarding Financial Outturn 2017 – 2018**

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board reported that the Board met on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018, following a referral from the Cabinet of the Council's financial outturn for 2017 - 2018 for each service area, the Housing Revenue Account, the Council's capital programme outturn and the Treasury Management outturn (see Minute No. 85/18).

The Board discussed each Directorate's outturn report and made observations, comments and recommendations of which details were now submitted.

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### Resolved: -

- (1) that the recommendations from the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board be approved as follows:-
  - (a) that the proposals for the use of outturn surpluses for the following General Fund Services be endorsed:
    - (1) Corporate Management;
    - (2) Resources;
    - (3) Adult Social Care;
    - (4) Regeneration and Economy;
    - (5) Public Health and Regulatory Services;
    - (6) Neighbourhoods;
    - (7) Children's Services.
  - (b) that the proposals for the use of outturn surplus for the Housing Revenue Account be endorsed.

99/18

### **Action Taken on a Matter of Urgency – The West Midlands Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions and Amendment) Order**

The Leader of the Council presented details of an urgent action taken by the Executive Director – Resources, in relation to the Chief Executive being authorised to provide formal feedback to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions and Amendments) Order.

In order to deliver the £8 billion Investment Programme, the West Midlands Combined Authority was required to develop funding plans through new financial mechanisms to the value of £3 billion to support £2 billion of investment and associated debt finance costs agreed as part of the first Devolution Deal for the West Midlands.

The Local Government Finance Bill 2016/17 was drafted to provide Mayoral Combined Authorities with two potential routes to generate this funding, the first of which being Supplementary Business Rate (i.e. a scheme which was equivalent to existing powers which local authorities possess) and a Mayoral Infrastructure Supplement.

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The Mayoral Infrastructure Supplement was essentially similar to a Business Rate Supplement but with a small number of key differences. However this Bill was withdrawn.

As part of the second regional Devolution Deal, the West Midlands Combined Authority set out to Central Government the potential impact that the withdrawal of the Local Government Finance Bill would have on the West Midlands Combined Authority's ability to fund and deliver the Investment Programme. During these discussions, it was suggested that a possible solution would be to simply extend to the West Midlands Combined Authority the equivalent and current powers that Local Authorities, including the seven Constituent Authorities and the Greater London Authority, already have to raise a Supplementary Business Rate.

The consent provided for the Devolution Agreement carried the intention to support the programme outcomes through a number of locally generated income streams which were a component of the £8 billion Programme. Whilst the Devolution Deal grant was expected to provide a long-term funding stream into Combined Authority (£36.5 million over 30 years), the remaining sources would need to be actively raised by the Combined Authority in partnership with local authorities and local businesses.

There was therefore a requirement for each Constituent Authority to approve the West Midlands Combined Authority having powers to raise Supplementary Business Rates.

The Leader expressed concerns that the matter had been dealt with as urgent and felt that good governance procedures should be adopted by the Combined Authority in order to consider decisions in a timely manner.

**Resolved** that details of the urgent action taken by the Executive Director – Resources in relation to the West Midlands Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions and Amendment) Order be noted.

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### **100/18 Minutes of the Cabinet Petitions Committee**

The minutes of the Cabinet Petitions Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 were received.

(Meeting ended at 1.47 pm)

<p>Contact Officer: Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3479</p>
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### Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy Revision Appendix 1

Title	Current Position	Proposal
Online applications and renewals	Section 2.2 'Making an application for a driver's License' states that all application forms must be submitted in person by the applicant'	Elements of the application process will move to online submission of documents for both new and existing drivers. This will include the completion of DBS applications via an online portal.  Face to face contact will continue so to validate documents and supply licenses.
Formatting of policy	The Policy document does not include sequential page numbers or a contents page.	The New policy will be paginated and include a contents page.
Cashless payments	The office currently accepts both cash and electronic payments. Section 1.4 of the Policy describes the payment methods available.	The office will move to cashless payments only.

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<p>Certificate of good conduct</p>	<p>The Policy at section 2.2, point 7 requires all applicants who have lived outside the UK to provide a criminal record check for the countries they have lived in.</p>	<p>New applicants will be required to produce criminal record checks or equivalent if they have lived outside the UK after the age of 18 for those countries they have resided in.</p> <p>Licensed Drivers who are required to attend committee due to their criminal convictions will need to produce a criminal record check or equivalent if they have been resident outside of the UK after the age of 18.</p> <p>Criminal Record Checks must be requested and supplied in compliance with Home Office guidance.</p> <p>New applicants or existing drivers who cannot produce a criminal record check will be referred to committee and invited to produce information that supports a suitability decision.</p>
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<p>Insurance</p>	<p>Section 3.21 from the Policy requires that Vehicle plates are dated to correspond with the duration of a driver's insurance presented at the time of licensing. This requires plates to be regularly renewed and reissued.</p> <p>The council currently charges a late production fee of £50 in the event that a driver does not produce insurance documents at the point of expiry.</p>	<p>Vehicle plates will be dated to correspond with the duration of the vehicle licence.</p> <p>Insurance documents will be required at point of application and renewal.</p> <p>The sanction for a lack of insurance is a suspension of the vehicle licence. The £50 late presentation fee will be removed from the policy.</p>
<p>Category C/D vehicles</p>	<p>The Policy at section 24. advises that any vehicle written off for insurance purposes will not be licensed regardless of category.</p>	<p>The Policy will allow the use of category S and N vehicles once they have passed both MOT and Sandwell's vehicle TAXI test. Such vehicles must have been licenced with Sandwell prior to the category S or N status.</p>
<p>Appointments and interviews</p>	<p>Section 1.3 of the Policy rigidly describes the interactions that can be dealt with through appointments and drop-ins.</p>	<p>The Policy will advise drivers to contact the Licensing Office to agree if they should attend a drop-in or book an appointment.</p>