

Licensing Committee

Monday, 11 November 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillors Joe Baker, Michael Braley, Andrew Fry, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King and Brenda Quinney

Officers:

K Barnett and D Etheridge

Committee Services Officer:

P Ross

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Alan Mason, Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk and Pattie Hill.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 1st July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE - DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING

The Committee considered a report detailing the proposal to introduce mandatory disability awareness training for those drivers licenced by the Borough to drive Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. Members were asked to consider amending the Council's current policy and to adopt the new draft policy, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, to incorporate the mandatory requirement for disability awareness training.

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Chair

The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Licensing Committee meeting held on 17th December 2012, where Members received a detailed referral report in relation to the finding of the "Access for Disabled People Task Group"; and the recommendation that Redditch Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers be offered suitable disability awareness training to assist them in carrying out their role. At the Licensing Committee meeting held on 11th March 2013, Members resolved that officers undertook a 12 week consultation with the Redditch taxi trade on the proposal to make disability awareness training a mandatory requirement for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers in the Borough.

At the Licensing Committee meeting held on 1st July 2013, Members considered the responses received during the 12 week consultation period and resolved to proceed with the proposal to make disability awareness training a mandatory requirement for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers in the Borough; with the exception of those drivers who could demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that they had undertaken equivalent disability awareness training.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner explained that new applicants would be required to undertake the required mandatory training before they were granted a licence to drive Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire Vehicles. Licences for existing licensed drivers would not be renewed after 1st July 2014 unless the licence holder had undertaken the required mandatory disability awareness training. This would enable those driver's whose license expired shortly after 1st July 2014 a reasonable opportunity to undertake the required mandatory training in plenty of time before they had to renew their licences.

Members were further informed that the training, from the proposed training provider Worcestershire County Council, was designed to provide Redditch taxi drivers with the knowledge and skills required to transport customers who may have a disability both safely and confidently. The training sessions would accommodate approximately 15 delegates at a cost of £20.00 per delegate. The training sessions would be held every three weeks at the Town Hall. It was anticipated that three sessions would be offered per day as follows:

- 10.00am – 12.30pm
- 1.00pm – 3.30pm
- 4.00pm – 6.30pm

Councillor Braley highlighted the need to ensure that there was the capacity to deal with the number of drivers who would require training so that none of the drivers experienced any delays in receiving the training; and that officers should have a contingency plan in place should the proposed trainer be unable to carry out the training.

In response the Senior Licensing Practitioner agreed to look into a contingency plan. He informed Members that he was confident that the six month period from 1st January 2014 to 1st July 2014 was sufficient time for all required drivers to receive the mandatory training.

Councillor Fry stated that he fully supported the training initiative and, as detailed in the report, the recommendation for disability awareness training had come from a referral report in relation to the finding of the "Access for Disabled People Task Group". Councillor Fry expressed his thanks to the Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Mason, for chairing the Task Group.

Councillor Baker agreed and felt that the Council was setting a good precedent and that it was important for residents to feel safe and secure and that the training added to the professionalism of the taxi trade.

RESOLVED that

the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing Policies, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted with effect from 1st January 2014.

29. LICENSED VEHICLE MILEAGE INFORMATION

The Committee were asked to note information as requested at the Licensing Committee meeting held on 1st July 2013 with regard to the recorded mileage of licensed vehicles in the Borough that were registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) as of 1st March 2010.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner explained that the mileage information had been provided as a result of concerns raised by a Member of the Licensing Committee, at the meeting as detailed in the preamble above. His concerns suggested that the twice yearly testing of vehicles within three years of their first registration was a somewhat onerous burden on drivers and operators. Officers had carried out a search of the records kept on licensed vehicles and had been able to provide information on the mileage recorded on the Ministry of Transport (MOT) test certificates received in respect of licensed vehicles that had been registered by the DVLA since 1st

March 2010. The information was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Following further discussion Members highlighted that the information provided was somewhat confusing and questioned the small number of vehicles identified.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner responded to Members' questions with regard to the average yearly mileage of a taxi. He explained that the average mileage for a taxi was 30,000 to 50,000 miles per year. The DVLA information provided the initial registration details it did not detail when the vehicle first became a taxi.

Members agreed that taking into account the average mileage of a taxi the Council's policy was correct in stating that vehicles would undergo two vehicle inspection tests per year. Members questioned if 'spot checks' on taxis were still carried out. The Senior Licensing Practitioner informed Members that 'spot checks' were still carried out with officers working in partnership with the Police and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA).

Members agreed that officers provide further detailed information on mileage data for vehicles tested within three years of their first registration to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the contents of the report and Appendix 1 to the report be noted, and**
- 2) **Officers provide further detailed information on mileage data for vehicles tested within three years of their first registration to a future meeting of the Committee.**

30. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE POLICY - MULTI SEATED WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

The Committee considered a report detailing the responses received to a consultation with the taxi trade on the draft Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy to bring it in line with the Council's Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy, with regard to age extensions for adapted vehicles, which was adopted by the Council on 1st August 2013.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and in doing so referred to the Licensing Committee meeting held on 1st July 2013 where Members had resolved to adopt a new Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy. The new Policy provided a higher age criteria for vehicles constructed or adapted to load and convey

wheelchair bound passengers to be licensed up to 12 years old (143 months) from the date of first registration as new by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Members were informed that only one response to the consultation had been received, as detailed in section 3.12 in the report.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner responded to Councillor Baker with regard to item 10 of the Draft Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy, the 'transfer' of an existing hackney carriage vehicle licence to a vehicle of similar type.

RESOLVED that

the draft Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved to come into effect from 1st December 2013.

31. LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

Members noted the Licensing Committee Work Programme for the remainder of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the Licensing Committee Work Programme 2013/2014 be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.36 pm