

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE 3 MINUTES - 9 MAY 2018

Present: Councillor Woodward (Chair);

Councillors Maskell (substitute for Councillor D Edwards), McDonald and Skeats.

Apologies: Councillors D Edwards.

39. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

40. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE NUMBERS POLICY

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report allowing the Sub-Committee to review the impact of the current policy which had limited the number of hackney carriages for the past three years and to consider whether the policy should remain in place.

The report explained that the Office of fair Trading had directed that limiting the number of licenses should only take place if it could be demonstrated that there was a clear benefit to the customer and an unmet demand survey would be required every three years to confirm whether or not an unmet demand existed for hackney carriage services.

The report advised that in March 2009, in view of a 40% increase in the number of Hackney Carriage licences over the previous two years, members had resolved not to issue any further licences for hackney carriages and had instructed officers to carry out an unmet demand survey. The results of unmet demand surveys had been reported to Members in 2010, 2012 and 2016 and on each occasion Members had resolved to retain the policy of not issuing any further hackney carriage licences.

The report explained that if the Sub-Committee decided to conduct another survey of unmet demand, it could consider increasing hackney carriage proprietor licence fees in order to fund the costs of the survey and of the officer time in preparing the survey and implementing the findings. The only transport consultants in this field were LVSA, who had indicated to officers that they would be in a position to commence an unmet demand survey in September 2018, if required. The report stated that an increase in hackney carriage vehicle licence fees of around £64, to £400, for one year only would cover these costs.

The report stated that consultation had been carried out involving those affected by the proposal. A number of responses had been received, the majority of which were in favour of a survey to determine whether there was any unmet demand. The responses were set out in appendices to the report:

Appendix I Reading Taxi Association

Appendix II Private Hire Operators

Appendix III Hackney Carriage Drivers in favour of a survey

Appendix IV Hackney Carriage Drivers in favour of deregulation

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Mr Asif Rashid, Chair of the Reading Taxi Association, was present at the meeting, with other members of the trade, and addressed the Sub-Committee.

Mr Mahmood Mazhar was present at the meeting and addressed the Sub-Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That officers be instructed to commission an unmet demand survey and report back to the Sub-Committee;
- (2) That the current restriction be maintained until the Sub-Committee has received a report on the findings of the unmet demand survey;
- (2) That the total costs of the unmet demand survey be funded through an increase in Hackney Carriage proprietor licence fees, noting that the increase would be approximately £64 per vehicle for one year only.

41. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items of business as it was likely that there would be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

42. APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SUSPENSION/REVOCATION OF A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on an application for consideration of the suspension/revocation of a private hire vehicle operator's licence in respect 1st Class Travel Berkshire Ltd to operate five vehicles.

A summary of the circumstances of the case was appended to the report.

AR, was present at the meeting and addressed the Sub-Committee.

Resolved -

That AR's Private Hire Vehicle Operator's Licence be revoked due to:

- a) the nature of the most recent offence;
- b) the history as a private hire vehicle operator of 1st class cars as detailed in the report;
- c) the licence-holder's indication that he felt unable to operate the private hire business legally;
- d) the licence-holder's indication that he would prefer to downsize his operation, inferring a lack of desire to keep his licence.

43. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT, RENEWAL, SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF A HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER LICENCE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Sub-Committee to consider the suspension/revocation of a licence to drive a hackney carriage vehicle.

A summary of the circumstances of the case was appended to the report.

MH, was present at the meeting and addressed the Sub-Committee. Mr MH was accompanied by Mr F who addressed the Sub-Committee on his behalf.

Resolved -

That the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence of MH be suspended for a period of 14 days, with effect from the end of 21 days' notice of the decision being given to the driver, for the reasonable causes pursuant to section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 outlined below:

- (a) the nature of the incident, as detailed in the report;
- (b) breach of licence conditions, traffic regulations and legislation, as detailed in the report.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 1, 2, 3 and 5)

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.40 pm)