

Minutes

Licensing Committee

18th April 2011



Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
M J Banthorpe (Chairman)	Yes	M Lynch	Yes
J C Collar	Yes	T McArdle	No
J G J Elliott	No	A M Meyer	No
R Elliston	Yes	Mrs J A Pell	Apologies
J H G Finbow	Yes	A F Shelton	Yes
Mrs S A Howell	Yes	Mrs J A Smith	Apologies
P J Hughes	Yes	F Swallow	Yes
E R Lynch	Yes		

31 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

32 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 12th January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

34 **KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVERS**

INFORMATION: Members were reminded that on 19th May 2010 the Committee had agreed to the introduction of an electronic test for new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers' licences in order to test their knowledge of the District; licensing legislation; and their ability to speak and understand English, and to assist in determining whether they were a 'fit and proper' person to hold such a licence. The introduction of the test was subject to consultation being undertaken and to a further report being submitted to the Licensing Committee for final approval of the proposal.

Consultation had now taken place and Members considered a report on the proposed format of the test and received a demonstration of it. Representatives of Braintree District Taxi Association attended the meeting and commented on the proposal.

In order to reduce long-term costs to the Council, it had been proposed that the knowledge test should be automated and external funding had been secured through

the Quality Taxi Partnership and Essex County Council to purchase a laptop, software and maintenance/licence fee for three years. A pool of test questions had been identified and these were summarised in the report. A candidate would be allocated one hour and 15 minutes to complete the test whilst supervised and it was proposed that tests should be available on Tuesday mornings once every two weeks. It was proposed to charge applicants a fee of £16 for each test. This cost would be re-assessed each year.

It was proposed that an applicant must pass the test before being able to apply for a driver's licence. If a candidate failed the test they would be entitled to re-sit it and there would be no limit to the number of tests taken. It was proposed that the knowledge test should be introduced from 1st June 2011.

In discussing this item, Members agreed that the proposed duration of the test was too long and that it should be reduced by 15 minutes.

DECISION: That an electronic knowledge test for new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers' licences be introduced with effect from 1st June 2011, subject to the duration of the test being reduced to one hour and to the cost being set at £16.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

M J BANTHORPE

(Chairman)