

Minutes

Licensing Committee

28th September 2011



Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
M J Banthorpe (Chairman)	Yes	S A Howell	Yes
J Baugh	Yes	H D Johnson	Yes
T G Cunningham	Yes	J A Pell	Yes
J G J Elliott	Apologies	S Sandbrook	No
J H G Finbow	Apologies	A F Shelton	Apologies
M J Fincken	No	L S Walters	Yes
M E Galione	Apologies	S A Wilson	No
C Gibson	No	B Wright	Yes

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

2 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 18th April 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

4 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES - SURVEY**

INFORMATION: In order to meet its obligations under Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 and to defend the current policy of restricting the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences, the Council was required to undertake a survey to ascertain whether there were sufficient licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicles in the District. Arrangements were currently being made for this survey to take place and the outcome would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

DECISION: That the commissioning of a survey to ascertain whether there are sufficient licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicles in the District be endorsed.

5 **KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVERS - UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a progress report on the Driver Knowledge Test. Members were reminded that on 18th April 2011 the Committee had

agreed to the introduction of a knowledge test for new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. An electronic based examination had been implemented with effect from 1st June 2011. The general aim of the test had been to improve the standard and status of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and vehicles both within the District and in passenger transport.

Since implementation, nine candidates had sat the test and all had failed it. Only one candidate had passed the test and had taken three attempts to do so. Based on the data supplied, it was too early to ascertain if the cost of the test to the Authority exceeded the original projected cost and it was proposed that this should be reassessed 12 months after implementation. Since the introduction of the test the Authority had received a small number of verbal objections from operators and candidates who had failed it. At the time of implementation, the issue of driver exemptions had not been fully explored. Examples of where an exemption could be relevant would include drivers who solely undertook executive work predominately outside the District, or school contracts from point to point and it had been questioned whether an exemption should be granted in such situations.

In discussing this item, it was agreed that a copy of the test questions should be sent to new Committee Members and that they should be given the opportunity to undertake the test.

DECISION: That the findings of the three month update be noted and that the knowledge test be reviewed again 12 months from the implementation date.

6 DEREGULATION OF SCHEDULE ONE OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 - CONSULTATION

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a consultation document issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on a proposal to remove licensing requirements for most activities currently defined as “regulated entertainment” and to deregulate Schedule One to the Licensing Act 2003. The proposal sought to remove licensing regulation which unnecessarily restricted creativity or participation in cultural and sporting events. Comments on the document were required by 3rd December 2011.

DECISION: That Members forward any views on the consultation document to the Licensing Officer by 21st October 2011 so that these may be incorporated in the Cabinet Member’s response to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

7 LICENSING UPDATE

INFORMATION: Mr D Mellini, Senior Environmental Health Officer, gave a verbal report on current licensing issues and, in particular, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.

DECISION: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

M J BANTHORPE

(Chairman)