

Licensing Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd February, 2012.

Present:- Councillors Davis (Chair), Abe (arrived at 7.01pm), S Chaudhry, Dodds, Long, Plenty, Rasib (Vice-Chair), Sharif and Sohal

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Munawar

PART 1

46. Declaration of Interest

None.

47. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 5th October 2011

The minutes of the last meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 5th October, 2011 were approved as a correct record.

48. Distribution of Free Printed Matter

Members were reminded that in October 2011 the Committee considered a report regarding proposals to implement regulations requiring the need to apply for consent to distribute free printed matter. The Committee decided to refer the matter to the Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel to investigate a number of issues.

The Neighbourhood and Community Services Panel at its meeting on 5th December 2011 considered the issue and concluded that there was no firm evidence that the scheme was needed and that the introduction of such a scheme could adversely affect businesses in difficult economic times.

Committee Members concurred with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Panel in deciding not to endorse proposals to implement regulations requiring the need to apply for consent to distribute free printed matter.

Resolved:- That regulations requiring the need to apply for consent to distribute free printed matter not to be implemented.

49. Rear Loading Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager on Rear Loading Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (RLWAV). The Committee was asked to resolve whether these vehicles were suitable to be licensed as Hackney Carriage Vehicles following consultation and if so, that the proposed new policy specifications and criteria contained within the report to be approved.

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Prior to presenting the report, the Licensing Manager advised that the report be amended so that a decision to approve the policy would be referred to Council, in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Licensing Manager outlined the key points in the report. Following the Committee meeting in October 2011 it was agreed that a consultation would be conducted following clarification on a number of points by Mr Mustafa who, on behalf of the Slough Taxi Drivers Union, had submitted the request for rear wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed. The response had been received on 3rd November 2011 and a full consultation had commenced on 18th November 2011. 16 responses had been received including 9 written or email responses from Hackney Carriage Drivers (all in favour), 3 email responses from none drivers (in favour), 3 email responses from none drivers (with none related comments) and a petition from members of the Hackney Carriage trade with 93 signatures (in favour). The Chair requested to view the full petition referred to in the report and this was produced by the Licensing Manager.

Details relating to the views from the Department for Transport (DfT) and other Local Authorities both for and against licensing RLWAV were outlined for Members consideration.

In the ensuing discussion, Members noted the fact that a range of organisations had been contacted and no objections had been received. It was also pointed out that a number of neighbouring Local Authorities had licensed these vehicles. A number of Members stated their opposition to the policy based on safety concerns which had also been previously raised at the last meeting of the Committee. These concerns and other issues were examined by Members and discussed with reference to responses received, the research carried out by the DfT and other authoritative bodies. Details of the policy specifications set by the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) were noted by the Committee.

Recommendation to Council:- That Rear Loading Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles are suitable to be licensed as Hackney Carriage Vehicles and the proposed new policy specifications and criteria contained within the report be approved.

50. Members' Attendance Record

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

51. Date of Next Meeting - 26th March 2012

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be held on 26th March, 2012.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.39 pm and closed at 7.19 pm)