

Licensing Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 22 December 2015 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Jermany (in the Chair); Councillors Coleman, Grant, Robinson-Payne and Wright.

Councillor T Wainwright substituted for Councillor H Wainwright.

Mr D Johnson (Solicitor, nplaw)

Mrs D Wilby, Mrs J Wells and Mrs C Webb (GYBC Officers)

Mr C Cawley (Advisor to GYBC)

Mr K Boyne, Mr M Smith, Mr R Symonds, Mr A Kitchen and Mr S Kitchen (Taxi Representatives)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Connell, Fairhead, Rodwell and H Wainwright.

3 TAXI POLICY

The Licensing and Elections Manager reported that due to changes to the duration of taxi licences following the Deregulation Act 2015, a review of the current taxi licensing policy had been undertaken.

A draft policy had been subject to consultation over a 6 week period during November and December 2015. Several letters with comments were received during this consultation and had been considered within the policy.

Mr Cawley reported that the Council's current taxi policy had not been updated since 2000 and it was thought appropriate to review procedures in line with new

Government legislation, following the Deregulation Act 2015 and current national good practice procedures.

The Licensing and Elections Manager summarised the main proposed changes as the introduction of a formal points system for drivers, the requirement for a group 2 medical, the introduction of a 3 year driver's licence and a 5 year operator's licence, all vehicles over 5 years old to have a compliance rest every 6 months and no roof signs for Private Hire vehicles.

The Licensing and Elections Manager reported that the draft policy needed to be approved in order for the final policy to be considered at Full Council and published on 1 April 2016.

A Member asked why smaller vehicles with engine sizes smaller than the recommended 1400 cc could not be allowed to operate as they were a "greener option".

He was also concerned with the term "scratches" when considering the cosmetic appearance of the vehicle.

Mr Cawley reported that the 1400 cc engine size conformed to national best practice guidelines for Hackney Carriage vehicles. Smaller engine size vehicles could be registered as Private Hire.

A Member reported that she welcomed the introduction of the penalty point system which would assist the Committee in determining future cases.

A Member asked if the Licensing Officers were aware of any "uber" operators within the Borough.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that their first priority was the safety of the citizens of the Borough.

Mr Symonds asked that a user friendly handbook be produced and distributed to taxi drivers as the proposed policy document was difficult to negotiate. The Licensing and Elections Manager reported that this was in hand.

A taxi driver asked why the Council insisted that a new vehicle had to have a MOT. Mr Cawley explained the rationale behind the ruling.

The Chairman reassured the taxi drivers that all of their comments would be considered when the final policy document was produced.

RESOLVED:

That the draft policy be approved in order for the final policy to be considered at Full Council and published from 1 April 2016.

4 TAXI FEES

The Chairman reported that the report informed Members of the changes to taxi legislation following the Deregulation Act 2015. This act introduced changes to taxi legislation which included the requirement that driver's licences should last for three years and operator's licences for five years. In light of these changes a review of the taxi licensing policy and licence fees had been undertaken.

It was proposed that the fee for a combined Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers licence would increase from £60 - annual fee to £150 - 3 year licence. A Private Hire Operators licence would increase from £230 - 2 year licence to £300 - 5 year licence.

The Chairman reported that The Local Government (Miscellaneous) Act 1976 required Local Authorities to consult upon amendments to fees for 28 days. The above proposed charges are subject to a consultation period and this would be undertaken in January 2016.

The Licensing and Elections Manager reported that this report had been brought to Committee this evening for information only.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed fee be approved in principle subject to a 28 day consultation period in January 2016.

5 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The meeting ended at: 20:30