

PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2012

PRESENT:- Councillors Wayne Crabbe, Richard Hurley (Chair), Eric Shaw (Vice-Chair), Vera Tomlinson, Steve Wakefield and David Wren.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Junab Ali

1. Appointment of Chair for the Municipal Year 2011/12

Resolved – That Councillor Richard Hurley be Chair of the Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year, 2011/12.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2011/12

Resolved – That Councillor Eric Shaw be Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year, 2011/12.

3. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2010, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

5. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda Item 10 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 9 refers.)

6. Public Question Time

Mr. Tony Johnson referred to the current situation relating to the overflow at taxi ranks and the need for extra ranks for taxis and asked if Members would, for Health and Safety reasons, consider re-introducing a limit on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed to operate within the Borough?

The Chair responded to the question at the meeting.

Mr. Dan Cooper asked if Swindon Borough Council would follow the lead of other towns and make tests for Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences more difficult.

The Chair responded at the meeting.

Mr. Ian Hunt asked why the Council was not willing to undertake an unmet demand survey in Swindon when the last survey was undertaken three years ago since when the business conditions for Hackney Carriage Drivers had significantly worsened?

The Chair responded at the meeting.

Mr. Ian Hunt asked a question relating to the expectation, on behalf of Hackney Carriage Drivers of commercial competence by the Council. The Chair indicated that if Mr. Hunt submitted a written question in relation to this matter a written response would be provided.

7. Review of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification Age Limits

The Interim Director of Planning and Transport, Environment Regeneration and Community submitted a report setting out proposed amendments to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification and reviewing the age limit for those vehicles that meet the Swindon wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification.

Resolved – (1) That the Council be recommended to approve the amended Swindon Hackney Carriage Specifications as set out in Appendix C to the report and confirm that the age limit for newly licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles take affect from 1st April, 2012.

(2) That the Director of Planning and Transport be requested to submit a further report to this Sub-Committee in 2014 setting out proposals for age limits for vehicles that meet the Swindon wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage Specification based on this Council's, and other Local Authorities, experience on the durability of these vehicles.

8. Review of Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Upper Age Limits

The Interim Director of Planning and Transport, Environment Regeneration and Community submitted a report setting out a request to remove the upper age limit on wheelchair accessible Hackney carriage Vehicles and on Private Hire Vehicles.

Resolved – (1) That Council be recommended to approve:

- (a) That, subject to (c) below, the vehicle age limit for wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage Vehicles be increased from the current age limit of 12 years to 15 years.
- (b) That, subject to (c) below, the vehicle age limit for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Saloon Vehicles be increased from the current age limit of 7 years to 10 years.
- (c) That the extension of age limits the vehicle age limit set out in (a) and (b) above be subject to passing a twice yearly inspection when they reach 10 years of age (wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage Vehicles) and 5 years of age (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Saloon Vehicles).
- (2) That officers submit a further report to this Sub-Committee regarding a check list for the inspections referred to in (c) above, together with the delegation of authority for Licensing Officers to refuse to licence any vehicle that in their opinion has not been exceptionally maintained.

9.

Review of Drivers Licence

The Sub-Committee considered, (a) a report of the Interim Director of Planning & Transport Environment, Regeneration and Community setting out an application from a Hackney carriage Driver to remove conditions applied by the Sub-Committee to the grant of his licence, (b) oral submission on behalf of the Hackney Carriage Driver in support of the removal of conditions applied to his licence, and (c) questions to the applicant and officers and answers received in respect of the application to remove conditions from the licence issued.

Resolved – (1) That the Sub-Committee notes the action taken after consultation between the Council's Taxi Licensing Officers, The Principal Solicitor and the Chair of the Sub-Committee regarding the granting of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence and conditions placed upon the licence in agreement with the person named in the report.

(2) That the appeal by the person named in the report be refused and the conditions applied to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence issued to him remain in place on the licence.