

PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 1 MARCH 2010

PRESENT:- Councillors Andy Albinson, Andrew Bennett (Chair), Doreen Dart, Kevin Parry and Bob Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Dickinson, Maurice Fanning, Fay Howard and Eric Shaw.

13. 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.

14. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2009, be confirmed and signed.

15. Public Question Time

The Sub-Committee received a number of Public Questions from (a) Mr. Shelford (Hackney Carriage Driver), Mr. Scanlon (Hackney Carriage Driver), (c) Mr. Alan Wells (Hackney Carriage Driver), (d) Mr. Baines (Hackney Carriage Proprietor), (e) Mr. Johnson (Hackney Carriage Driver), (f) Mr. Lucas (Hackney Carriage Proprietor), and (g) Mr. Mark Bates (Hackney Carriage Driver) relating to the following issues:

- (i) Whether the Council's Strategy was to remove Saloon Cars from the town's Hackney Carriage fleet;
- (ii) Who had authorised the policy of removing Saloon Cars from the Hackney Carriage fleet;
- (iii) the cost of replacement vehicles and whether any newly approved vehicles would be required to meet the London Licensing Standards;
- (iv) whether all vehicles would need to be wheel chair compliant or whether the Council accepted that some disabled people preferred to use saloon type vehicles;
- (v) whether a decision could be deferred pending a full consultation with the Hackney Carriage trade and other interested parties;
- (vi) whether the Council accepted that there could be technical difficulties in implementing any decision on new vehicle specifications; and
- (vii) Whether the Vito and E7 were compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and whether a disabled driver could drive them.

The Chair noted that the comments and issues raised during public question time would be considered as part of the Sub-Committee's deliberations. He noted that the proposal on removing Saloon Cars from the Hackney Carriage Fleet was only a proposal for consideration by the Sub-Committee and that no decision had been made in respect of this. The Government had not regulated the use of saloon cars as Hackney Carriages and the Council in reaching a decision wanted to establish

formal arrangements, which would be of benefit to both the Council, the public and the trade.

He expected that any decision made at the meeting would be the subject of consultation including Hackney Carriage Drivers and Proprietors as well and Equality Coalitions.

He would arrange for a written response on the question of whether the Veto and E7 were compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and whether a disabled driver could drive them.

He noted that presentations on the LTI and E7 taxi's would be made by Messrs Overton and Fryer but stressed that the Council was not endorsing either of these vehicles for future use.

16. Hackney Carriage Saloon Car Licences

The Sub-Committee considered (a) a report of the Group Director of Environment, Regeneration and Community setting out proposals to agree a policy regarding the future specification of vehicles eligible to be licensed as Hackney Carriages, (b) a presentation by Mr. Terry Fryer on the E7 Vehicle, (c) a presentation by Mr. Andrew Overton on the LTI Vehicle, (d) issues raised by members of the Hackney Carriage Trade during public question time and points of clarification during the debate, (e) correspondence from Swindon Black Cab Company Limited and Mr. Ian Carlton Hunt regarding the use of saloon cars as Hackney Carriages, (f) issues relating to the Disability Discrimination Act and (g) questions from Councillors and answers received.

Resolved – That a Working Group comprising Councillors Andy Albinson, Doreen Dart and Bob Wright be established to consider questions to be included in a consultation on the future use of saloon cars as Hackney Carriage Vehicles.

17. Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Knowledge Tests

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Group Director, Environment, Regeneration and Community setting out proposed amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Knowledge Tests.

Resolved – That the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Knowledge Tests be amended from 1st April 2010, to include a further section of ten questions, with a pass mark of 80%, on the Highways Code and associated matters.