

Licensing and Appeals Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2015

Present:

Councillor Longsdon in the Chair
Councillors Austin, Barrett, Evans, Grimshaw, Hughes, S. Judge, Loughman, Ludford, and Paul,

Apologies:

Councillors Monaghan.

LAP/15/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 15 June 2015 were submitted for consideration as a correct record.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2015.

LAP/15/17 Taxi Licensing Update Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing which provided an update for the Committee of current matters that are of relevance to taxi licensing functions. The 4 main topics included;

1. Deregulation Act 2015
2. Fees & Charges associated with the administration of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing functions
3. Safeguarding Booklet
4. Vehicle testing

The Committee discussed the implications of the move of vehicle testing to Lawton Street Depot, and the extra capacity required. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that a Service Level Agreement had been reached with Salford City Council to provide additional capacity during the transition period, while extra capacity was being developed at the Lawton Street site. The Committee were assured that the costs involved with the SLA were comparable to the costs of retaining the testing service wholly in-house. The Committee were also assured that the costs of testing where appointments were missed were charged in full to the non-attendees.

The Committee expressed concern that any individual who has made an application for a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence to the licensing unit on or from 1 October will have been issued with a 3-year licence. Likewise, applications for a private hire operator licence received on or after 1 October 2015 will have been issued with a 5-year licence. The Committee were assured that the safeguarding measures introduced by the Council, which include an annual DBS certificate check for all existing private hire and hackney carriage licence holders, as well as the

existing requirements to notify the Licensing Unit of any new or pending matters would address their concerns.

The Committee queried why the Licensing arrangements were different for Hackney Carriage Drivers and Private Hire Drivers and were informed that this was due to differences in the parts of the Legislation that governed the different licences, as well as specific local bye-laws. The Principle Licensing Officer told the Committee that changes to local bye-laws to more closely align the licensing regimes for both types of licences were currently being considered by the Secretary of State, but that the requested changes had not yet been approved.

Decision

1. To note the report.
2. To request a report as to the progress of the bye-law changes currently under consideration of the Secretary of State.

LAP/15/18 Exclusion of the Public.

A recommendation was made that the public be excluded during consideration of the following items of business.

Decision

To exclude the public during consideration of the following items which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons, and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

LAP/15/19 Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver Licences issued under delegated authority between April – June 2015 (Public Excluded)

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of the decisions made under delegated authority in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver licenses.

Decision

To note the report.