

Licensing and Appeals Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2018

Present

Councillor Longsden (in the Chair)
Councillors Austin-Behan, Barrett, Cookson, Connolly, Evans, Grimshaw, Hassan, Hughes, Ludford, Madeleine Monaghan and Stone.

Apologies

Councillors Loughman and Paul.

LAP/18/1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 4 December 2017 were submitted for consideration as a correct record.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017

LAP/18/2 Taxi Compliance Quarterly Report Q1 and Q2 2017/18

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing which advised members of the compliance activity that had been undertaken by the Licensing Unit during April – June 2017 [Q1-17/18] and July - September 2017, [Q2- 17/18].

The Committee expressed concern that Ply-for-Hire is increasing, and that a specific area of concern is the City Centre. Deansgate and Peter Street are particular points of difficulty. Officers confirmed that this area of enforcement was a particular target, and that they had prioritised resources to deal with this issue.

Officers also confirmed that it is not possible to take action against the licences of drivers who are licenced by other local authorities, but that officers from neighbouring GM authorities and Rossendale do work in Manchester on occasion, targeting their drivers. Whilst some information is fed back, there is currently no formal process for reporting what action (if any) has been taken.

Decision

To note the report.

LAP/18/3 Exclusion of the public

Officers considered that the following item contains confidential information as provided for in the Local Government Access to Information Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The Licensing and Appeals Committee Hearing Panel is recommended

to agree the necessary resolutions excluding the public from the meeting during consideration of these items.

Decision

To exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting.

LAP/18/4 Consideration of the Suitability of Vehicles to be Licensed to Operate within Manchester as Hackney Carriage(s)

Mercedes Benz – Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. The report requested that the Committee considered representations from individuals wishing the Committee to consider the suitability of vehicles to be licensed in Manchester as Hackney Carriage vehicles.

The applicant was present and told the committee that his current vehicle was a London Taxi Company TX2, which had become financially unviable due to its age and rising costs of repair and maintenance. Officers also confirmed that information received from London Taxi Company confirms that it is not possible to buy a new TX vehicle (except for an Electric Hybrid). The difficulty with the Electric Hybrid is that the infrastructure to charge the vehicles does not yet exist in Manchester, which would make running and operating the vehicle unviable.

It is still possible to purchase second-hand TX vehicles, but the applicant said that he did not want a second-hand vehicle, he wanted to and was willing to invest in a brand new vehicle.

The Committee, when considering the application commented that in their view a brand new vehicle as an addition to the taxi fleet was a better option than a second-hand vehicle and could only be viewed as an enhancement to the fleet.

The Committee had previously agreed that the matter should be sent for a wide ranging consultation with members of the Trade, disabled people and their advocates and representatives of age friendly Manchester before making a final decision as to the suitability of either vehicle to be licensed in Manchester as hackney carriage vehicles.

In the interim period the Committee agreed that the application from this individual driver to exempt this vehicle from the current policy to allow the Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage on HV0929 pending the outcome of the wider Policy Consultation and Review. In addition the Committee agreed that this application would be allowed 'grandfather rights' in the event that it is not given wider exemption following the Policy Review.

Decision

1. To grant the application for the Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage on HV0929.

2. To allow the Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage on HV0929 with grandfather rights in the event that it is not given wider exemption following the Policy Review.