

Licensing and Appeals Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2018

Present

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

Apologies

Councillors Connolly, and Loughman.

LAP/18/11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26 February 2018 were submitted for consideration as a correct record.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018.

LAP/18/12 Taxi Compliance Quarterly Report

The Committee were presented with the report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. The report informed in respect of compliance work undertaken by the Unit during October - December 2017.

Officers drew the Committee attention to Appendix A, which provided an update as to the effect of the refreshed Licensing Policy in Rossendale. Officers confirmed that the implementation of the new policy had resulted in a 56% reduction in the issue of Hackney Carriage Driver Licences since its introduction in February 2016.

Officers also provided an update to the Committee regarding a refused application for renewal of a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence that had been successfully appealed. Officers confirmed that due to further developments, this matter was now in abeyance.

Decision

To note the report.

LAP/18/13 Taxi Licensing Update on service improvements.

The Committee were presented with the report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. The report provided information of changes that have already been made to service delivery and some proposed changes for implementation pending further service review.

The Committee commented that there is an issue with some of the trade not taking proper consideration for other vulnerable road users, and whether measures to

address this issue could be included in the service review. Officers confirmed that a separate exercise was being carried out that would be reported to the Committee in due course and would include feedback from vulnerable road users.

Decision

1. To agree that pending a full review of the way driver training is delivered in the future (as outlined in section 3), that for driver applications processed on or after 1 April 2018:
 - a. Applicants for hackney carriage / private hire driver licences.
 - i. will be offered an online Skills Assessment.
 - ii. will no longer be required to attend a 'coaching session' and this support will be provided via materials online
2. To agree the Implementation of an Online DBS application solution for DBS applications processed on or after 1 April 2018.
3. To agree that following the processing of a hackney carriage or private hire driver application to the stage of offering a skills assessment/knowledge test that applicants will be advised that following a period of 6 months, where no contact has been made, an application will be withdrawn with any appropriate refund being made.
4. To agree the implementation of the annual vehicle inspection test for brand new hackney carriage vehicles be carried out 6 months after the commencement date of the licence. This would be subject to the following:
 - a. This will refer only to replacement vehicles on a hackney carriage vehicle licence. Where the replacement vehicle purchased is brand new (with delivery mileage only).
 - i. Vehicle proprietors must, as an addition to the current application process, complete sign and submit a form declaring that the vehicle conforms completely to the current Manchester Vehicle Policy and that if at the 6 month test this is not found to be so, the vehicle would be liable to suspension.
5. Agree the implementation of the annual vehicle inspection test for brand new private hire vehicles be carried out 6 months after the commencement date of the licence. This would be subject to the following:
 - a. This will refer only to new/replacement vehicles on a private hire vehicle licence. Where the new/replacement vehicle purchased is brand new (with delivery mileage only).

LAP/18/14 Exclusion of the public

Officers considered that the following items contain 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/18/14 Request the consideration of allowing 4 x Mercedes Benz – Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 BlueTec, to be temporarily licensed as Hackney Carriages on HV0059, HV0095, HV0231 and HV0481 pending the outcome of the Hackney Carriage Policy Consultation and Review

The Committee considered reports 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 applicants were all present and told the committee that their current vehicle was a London Taxi Company TX model, 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.

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 these drivers to exempt these vehicles from the current policy to allow the Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec to be licensed as Hackney Carriages on HV0059, HV0095, HV0231 and HV0481 pending the outcome of the wider Policy Consultation and Review. In addition the Committee agreed that these applications would be allowed 'grandfather rights' in the event that they are 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 Carriages on HV0059, HV0095, HV0231 and HV0481.

2. To allow the Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec to be licensed as a Hackney Carriages on HV0059, HV0095, HV0231 and HV0481 with grandfather rights in the event that they are not given wider exemption following the Policy Review.
3. To delegate to officers to determine at their discretion future applications for exemptions of Mercedes Benz - Vito Taxi CDI Compact 114 Blue Tec vehicles, where the vehicle purchased is brand new (with delivery mileage only).