

# Licensing Committee (Hackney Carriage)

Thursday 18 March 2010

## PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Dolan, in the Chair.  
Councillor Mrs Nicholson, Vice Chair.  
Councillors Delbridge and Reynolds.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bowie, Drean and Rennie.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.15 am.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 142. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in accordance with the code of conduct.

## 143. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of chairs urgent business.

### Appointment of Vice Chair

Resolved that Councillor Mrs Nicholson is appointed as Vice Chair for this meeting of the Committee as Councillor Drean had given his apologies.

## 144. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FEES FOR 2010/11

The Committee having -

- (i) considered the report from the Director for Community Services –
- (ii) heard from the Hackney Carriage trade representative that –
  - the report makes no mention of the budgets from the two trades under consideration; therefore, meaning that those making the decision have had no basis for the justification of the proposed fees to be imposed;
  - the Plymouth Licence Taxi Association (PLTA) were not content that a surplus had accrued in the Private Hire trade and request that the Licensing Authority transfer a sum of £80,000 to compensate for the apportionment that had been wrongly split between 2002 to 2009;
  - as a result of the council's defence of its policy to limit the number of Hackney Carriage vehicle licences court case in 2005/2006, it is believed that the Licensing Authority should now check every vehicle before it is permitted to operate;
  - the report insinuates that the Licensing Authority was awaiting the outcome of further action following the court case meaning that the proposed fees could be superseded by greater fees in the future;
  - it is requested that the Licensing Authority move to five yearly surveys to tie in with the cost of upgrading older vehicles and purchasing brand

new ones;

- the PLTA fully support the two month temporary vehicle licence as well as the new plates and signs and consider these to be a big improvement;
- the PLTA recognise the need for the increase in taxi driver and licence fees of 10% but feel that all other charges should enjoy parity with Private Hire fees;
- it is felt that the operators application fee and the operators driver fee are insufficient;
- many Private Hire vehicles had been contravening Appendix K, of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy particularly in respect of the signage policy;
- for approximately ten years the taxi trade had been promised a Traffic Order covering every taxi rank in the city due to vehicles parking on taxi ranks, an offence that was not currently enforceable by Parking staff. Lack of enforcement was one of the trade's biggest problems.

(iii) heard from the Principal Environmental Health Officer that –

- with regard to the contravening of Appendix K, the Licensing Authority had requested that the firms in question remove the signage from their doors;
- with regard to enforcement, an additional Enforcement Officer position had been advertised and this would address the lack of enforcement issues;
- that the Licensing Authority was not able to make a profit from this account and this had been the reason for the Private Hire trade not having an increase in their fees;
- the possibility of implementing a traffic order was being discussed with AMEY, the council's highways contractor;
- it was the Licensing Departments recommendation that the Committee consider extending the advertisement period from 14 days to 28 days to allow for an extended period of objections to the fees.

Resolved that –

- (1) the new fee structure as set out in the Fees Table (Appendix 1 of the report) is to be advertised in accordance with statutory requirements;
- (2) the period for objections in the advertisements is to be 28 days.

145. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There were no items of exempt information.