

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 24th October, 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

In a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor Keith Sears (Chairman)
Councillor Bill Tweddle (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bird
Councillor Keith Chambers
Councillor Peter Hughes
Councillor Cath Micklewright
Councillor John Rochelle
Councillor Graham Wilkes

1107/07 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anson, Barton, Beilby and Cassidy.

It was noted that Councillor Chambers was attending as a substitute for Councillor Cassidy.

1108/07 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July, 2007, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1109/07 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1110/07 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100a of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Recommendations from the Taxi/Private Hire Liaison Group**(a) Colour, Design and Livery of Hackney Carriages / Private Hire Vehicles**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Mr. John Beavon outlined the report and circulated possible alternative signage options for private hire vehicles.

With regard to Hackney Carriages, it was **moved** by Councillor Rochelle and duly **seconded**:-

That the current requirement that hackney carriages of the "London cab" type must be black, be retained.

An amendment was **moved** by Councillor Bird and duly **seconded**:-

That the current requirement that hackney carriages of the "London cab" type must be black, be removed provided the vehicles used are clearly identified as taxis by the illuminated roof signs.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **carried** with four members voting in favour and three against. The amendment was then put as the substantive motion and was declared **carried** with seven members voting in favour and one against.

Resolved

That the current requirement that hackney carriages of the "London cab" type must be black, be removed provided the vehicles used are clearly identified as taxis by the illuminated roof signs.

With regards to private hire vehicles it was **moved** by the Chairman and duly **seconded**:-

That subject to the livery of such vehicles being agreed by the committee:-

- (1) The current requirements that private hire vehicles of the "euro conversion" type must be white, be removed;
- (2) That a high visibility signage/livery be imposed as an alternative or addition to colour requirements.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **carried** with six members voting in favour and one against.

Resolved

That subject to the livery of such vehicles being agreed by the committee:-

- (1) The current requirements that private hire vehicles of the “euro conversion” type must be white, be removed;
- (2) That a high visibility signage/livery be imposed as an alternative or addition to colour requirements.

(b) Variable Licence period for Private Hire / Hackney Carriage Driver Licences

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Mr. John Beavon outlined the report.

The councils legal advisor, Miss Fiona Samuda referred to paragraph 13.4 of the report where it was proposed that licence holders submit to medical examinations every six years up to the age of 65 years. She pointed out that the councils current policy was five years. Mr. Beavon explained that the proposal was to change this to six years or to be coincident with the renewal period.

Reference was also made to paragraph 13.2 of the report where it was proposed that an extended licence should not be granted so as to operate after the age of 65 years. A question was raised whether this was in conflict with age discrimination legislation.

Resolved

That subject to officers being asked to check whether the proposal contained in 13.2 of the report is in conflict with age discrimination legislation, support be given to the proposal to introduce a variable licence period for private hire/hackney carriage driver licences in accordance with the terms set out in the report.

(c) Application fee for Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle Licences

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Mr. John Beavon outlined the report.

Resolved

That the report be noted and that the £25 application fee referred to in the report now submitted be retained.

(d) Taxi Marshalling

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Ms. Lorraine Boothman outlined the report and responded to questions from members. In doing so she indicated that funding for the taxi marshalling scheme had been approved under a local area agreement managed under the Safer and Stronger Communities Pillar Executive Group of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership and that the funding will support the taxi marshalling scheme until the end of March 2008.

Several suggestions regarding possible funding for the scheme were put forward including the carry forward of any under spend on the taxi licensing budget, approaches to night club operators and asking the local area agreement to continue to fund the scheme for a further twelve months. Reference was also made to the decriminalisation of parking in the near future when the council would be responsible for employing traffic wardens and suggestions that the traffic wardens could undertake the marshalling duties.

Resolved

That the success of the taxi marshalling scheme being endorsed and that officers strive to identify future funding to maintain the scheme and produce a report on how the scheme could be financed from within existing resources or through external sources, for submission to the next meeting of the committee.

1112/07

Private Session

Exclusion of Public

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda the committee considers that the items for consideration are exempt information for the reasons set out therein and Section 100a of the Local Government Act, 1972 and accordingly resolves to consider those items in private.

Summary of Matters considered in Private Session

Private Hire Licences

The Committee considered representations in respect of a number of taxi/private hire matters and made decisions thereon.

(Exempt information under Paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.34 p.m.

Chairman

Date