



- (2) That the Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager facilitate this meeting of the Committee.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded of the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct concerning the Declaration of Interests.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Between Mr Hussain and Mr Khan it was reported that, due to the impact of Covid-19, it was taking between 12 and 14 months to access the knowledge test required to be completed by drivers. As a result they were finding it difficult to find drivers with the appropriate qualifications. It was stated that data systems and Sat. Nav. directed drivers to the point of pick-up and drop-off. They therefore asked if the written knowledge test could be stopped and a Sat. Nav. test be used instead.

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager advised that, to ensure the safety of the public, it was important that drivers had a good working knowledge of the local area and could communicate well. The test covered these areas.

**4. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. HATE CRIME**

Syed Naqui, the Chairman of the East Lancashire Hate Crime Board attended the meeting to inform Members and the taxi trade of the support available to victims of hate crime. He advised that hate crime was on the rise, but continued to be under reported. It had been found that taxi drivers, one of the most vulnerable groups, had not been reporting incidents.

Mr Naqui gave assurance that the taxi trade had the support of the police and the Hate Crime Board and encouraged them to report any incidents.

It was felt that this topic should be placed as a standing item on future meetings of this Committee. This was welcomed by Mr Naqui, who agreed to attend future meetings, with a police representative where possible, and report issues back to the Board.

**6. AGE LIMIT OF LICENSED VEHICLES**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report which asked Members to consider a request from the Pendle Private Hire and Hackney Trade Associations to remove the age limit of licensed vehicles.

It was noted that the current age limit for the Council's licensed vehicles was up to a maximum of seven years when first licensed. A licensed vehicle could then continue to be licensed until it reached eleven years of age. For wheelchair accessible vehicles the corresponding times were

seven through to twelve years of age and for a London style hackney carriage through to fifteen years.

The proposal from the trade was that the age limit be removed with immediate effect. It believed that having an arbitrary age limit was not one that could be sustained going forward and asked that the Council adapt to the requirements of the trade. An amendment to the regime for testing of vehicles was also proposed.

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager reminded the Committee of the results of the last spot check that had been carried out. Of 18 vehicles tested, 14 had failed. This was not untypical of previous ones where vehicle maintenance had been at an unacceptable low level. Members were asked to consider that by allowing older, and by definition, more well-used vehicles to be licensed, the quality of vehicles, already a cause for concern, would erode further.

## **RESOLVED**

That no changes be made to the age limit of private hire vehicles and hackney carriages.

## **REASON**

*In the interests of public safety.*

## **7. HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report for Members to consider the commissioning of an unmet demand survey.

It was explained that the Council currently had a Policy by which no more than 71 hackney carriage licenses could be issued. The level at which this quantity restriction was set was addressed by means of a survey. Surveys then had to be carried out sufficiently frequently to be able to respond to any challenge to the satisfaction of the court. An interval of three years was commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys.

The Committee was advised that the last survey was carried out in 2013 (adopted in 2014) and therefore a further survey was now required.

The approximate cost of the survey was in the region of £6,000. This would go out to tender to experienced consultants.

Members were asked to consider whether hackney carriage proprietors should be consulted as to whether they would fund the unmet demand survey. The cost of the survey could be apportioned over a three year period and added to the hackney carriage licence fee as done previously.

## **RESOLVED**

That hackney carriage proprietors be consulted as to whether they would fund the unmet demand survey and the results reported back to the next meeting of this Committee.

**REASON**

***To establish whether the costs of carrying out an unmet demand survey can be recovered through the licence fees.***

**8. RESULTS OF APPEALS/PROSECUTIONS**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report which informed the Committee of the results of appeals/prosecutions since the last meeting.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_