



## Taxi Licensing Committee (18.11.2021)

age. The request was for this to be changed to 10 years when first licensed, through to 15 years of age.

They explained that the vehicles referred to were more expensive to purchase and were used less frequently than others. They had lower mileage and developed fewer faults.

- A second question related to the knowledge test and a request that this be stopped. Reference was made to Preston City Council where, it was believed, there was no requirement to complete a knowledge test. It was felt that the test was unnecessary, as an understanding of the Highway Code was a requirement of holding a driving licence, and data systems and Sat. Nav. directed drivers to the point of pick-up and drop-off. Also, many drivers carried out school contract work only, which covered the same route, with the same passengers.

It was stated that they were already finding it difficult to make a living with increased insurance and fuel costs, and the lack of local nightlife made it hard to recruit experienced drivers. The need to pass a knowledge test added to the difficulties.

The Taxi Licensing Manager advised that the knowledge test not only covered the Highway Code, but various topics, such as the conditions attached to licences. A revision guide which provided information on any changes was also included. All of this was essential information.

The Chairman advised that both vehicle age limits and the knowledge test were elements of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The Council's Policy was currently under review and was due to be considered elsewhere on the agenda. It was agreed that these two topics be considered at that stage.

### **20. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **21. HATE CRIME**

The Chairman provided the following update from Syed Naqui, the Chairman of the East Lancashire Hate Crime Board, who had been unable to attend the meeting.

He reported that, following his attendance at the July meeting of this Committee, Mr Naqui had spoken to the police both locally and at headquarters in relation to the issues raised and advised as follows –

- The local Hate Crime Team was fully on board with supporting investigations and supporting taxi drivers who had been victim of hate crime and other crimes and incidents
- There was little funding available to pay for damage to taxis, but they were discussing other ways of potentially supporting drivers and getting them back on the road as soon as possible
- There was ongoing training and mentoring of officers to raise awareness of the issues that taxi drivers were facing, with a view to better understanding and communication

**22. DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATUTORY TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS AND POLICY REVIEW**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report in which the Committee was asked to consider, as part of the consultation process, the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The existing Policy had been adopted in 2016 and was now due for review. The response of the Committee would be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Alongside this, Members were also provided with information on the Department for Transport's (DfT) statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, which had been published in July 2020. The Council had a legal duty to have regard to this.

The action required from the statutory guidance was provided at appendix 1 to the report and included proposed updates to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy. Further recommended updates to the existing Policy, as part of the five year review, were included at appendix 2.

The proposed updates had been incorporated into the draft policy document, which was submitted at appendix 3.

It was noted that, since writing the draft policy, details of a requirement under the Finance Act 2021 had been published. This related to people being made aware of their tax responsibilities and required adding to the policy.

It was reported that the consultation period had begun earlier in the month and was due to end on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. There had been one response so far.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the consultation period be extended to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2022.
- (2) That consideration of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, incorporating the Department for Transport's statutory guidance, be deferred to a separate meeting of the Committee, to be convened prior to the end of the extended consultation period.
- (3) That the consultation responses be reported to a meeting of this Committee, prior to being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.

**REASON**

*To ensure the document is reviewed thoroughly.*

**23. HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY**

At the July 2021 meeting of this Committee it was agreed that Pendle's hackney carriage proprietors be consulted as to whether they would fund an unmet demand survey.

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report which

reported on the results of the consultation.

It was noted that Pendle currently had a set limit of 71 hackney carriage licenses. Of these, six had a condition that they must be wheelchair accessible. At the time of writing the report, only five were accessible which equated to 7%.

The majority of those that responded had not been in agreement to fund the survey and the Council did not have a budget for it. It was therefore recommended that the Council's policy be amended to remove the limit of 71 hackney carriage licenses, with a stipulation that any new applications must be for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to determine that -

- (1) an unmet demand survey is not carried out;
- (2) the limit of 71 hackney carriage licences be removed;
- (3) any applications for new hackney carriage licenses be issued with a condition that they must be wheelchair accessible and in accordance with the Council's age limit policy of not older than seven years when first presented for licensing and continue until 12 years of age.

## **REASON**

- (1) *The trade do not want to pay for an unmet demand survey.*
- (2) *Without a survey there is no evidence supporting a restriction on the number of hackney vehicles so there is no justification to maintain a limited number.*
- (3) *The Council has a disproportionately low number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in comparison to saloon vehicles.*

## **24. 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.

## **25. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

### **RESOLVED**

That in pursuance of the power contained in Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the next items of business on the grounds that if a member of the public and press were present during consideration of the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person/persons.

## **26. INTERVIEWS**

### **(1) Report on AAB**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report in

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respect of AAB. AAB attended for interview with one representative.

**RESOLVED**

That AAB be granted a hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence for a temporary six month period and, should no further issues arise, the licence be renewed for a further six months.

**(2) Report on (UCL) AA**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report in respect of (UCL) AA. (UCL) AA attended for interview with their partner and a legal representative.

**RESOLVED**

(1) That (UCL) AA be given a formal warning as to future conduct and be instructed to continue to comply with the licensing conditions.

(2) That no further action be taken.

**(3) Report on AA**

The Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report in respect of AA. AA attended for interview with their partner and a legal representative.

**RESOLVED**

That no further action be taken.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_