

LICENSING COMMITTEE

27th January 2020

Present – Councillors Myers (Chairman), Handley, Metcalfe, Moorby, Solloway and Whitaker.

Officers – Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer), Licensing Manager, Webmaster and Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heseltine, Jaquin, Madeley, Mulligan and Pighills.

Start: 6.35pm

Finish: 8:26pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 1st October 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

LIC.231

ON-LINE TAXI LICENCE RENEWALS

The Chairman introduced Jamie Fletcher, the Council's Webmaster who gave an overview on the progress that had been made on introducing an on-line taxi licence renewals system. It was hoped that taxi drivers/operators would find the on-line system straightforward and easier than paper applications and it was anticipated that there would be a reduction in the number of visits applicants would need to make to the Licensing Office. On-going support and training would be provided to those applicants who found the completion of computerised forms difficult. Whilst the on-line system would not be mandatory drivers would be encouraged to submit electronic applications and pay for their licences on-line.

Resolved – That, the verbal report is noted.

LIC.232

VEHICLE TESTING UPDATE

The Licensing Manager submitted a report informing Members of the outcome of the tendering process to appoint suitably qualified MOT testing stations across to perform hackney carriage and private hire vehicle tests. Members had wanted to see additional testing stations across the District to improve the choice and convenience available to the taxi trade. Currently only one garage was undertaking the work for the whole of Craven.

Out of the 24 MOT testing stations in the District, only the existing provider had submitted a tender to provide vehicle testing for Craven taxis. It was anticipated that the contract would commence from 17 February 2020 for one year with the option to extend by mutual agreement for up to one year each time.

Members were disappointed with the response and wanted to see more garages on Craven's approved list of testing stations which the taxi trade could utilise. Ideally, Members had wanted to see testing stations in the North and South of the District as well as Skipton. Members suggested that, before the next tendering process commenced, Licensing Officers could review the tender forms to make them more user friendly and perhaps hold a drop-in session to explain what was involved as well as answering any specific questions and concerns.

Resolved – (1) That, the report is noted.

(2) That, following the tendering process, the list of approved garage(s) is noted.

LIC.233

CCTV

The Licensing Manager submitted a report presenting Members with the results of a consultation exercise carried out as part of the introduction of mandatory CCTV in licensed vehicles. As part of the new Taxi Licensing Policy introduced in June 2018, Members made an in principle decision to make CCTV in licensed vehicles mandatory effective from 1st April 2020.

The Licensing Manager also circulated at the meeting details setting out some of the complaints that had been received from members of the public regarding their taxi journeys.

In June 2019 Members were advised about the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's response to the Department of Transport's consultation on national standards for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles. Following on from that, and recommendations made by the Council's Information Governance Manager, Members requested that a consultation exercise be undertaken regarding the implementation of mandatory CCTV.

The consultation period ran from 11th November 2019 to 8th December 2020 and was available to complete on-line or by paper from the Council's offices. In addition, a list of stakeholders were actively approached. A total of 112 responses were received, of which 41 came from the trade, representing only 25% of drivers licensed in Craven. The results of the consultation were attached to the Licensing Manager's report.

Members felt that whilst the Licensing Authority had to act proportionately, they re-iterated that, as a Licensing Authority, the safety of the travelling public, which included vulnerable passengers, was paramount. Members also held the view that CCTV would also provide protection to drivers who were sometimes placed in challenging situations. In relation to potential security issues surrounding CCTV Members were comforted by the fact that the devices would be heavily encrypted and fitted to vehicles well away from public access with only three or four authorised officers having access to the data. As well as this, CCTV would meet all the compliance requirements of the Data Protection laws and regulations.

Regarding the purchase and installation of CCTV, Members were mindful of the expenditure that the taxi trade would have to incur and discussed an implementation date that would be realistic to all concerned, and it was

Resolved – (1) That, CCTV in all Craven's licensed vehicles is mandatory from 1st September 2020.

(2) That, an exception to (1) above is given for vehicles that are within four months of the end of the period they can be licensed.

(3) That, the Council's Data Controller registration with the Information Commissioner's Office is updated as required.

LIC.234

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Licensing Solicitor submitted a report asking Members to consider undertaking a review of the Terms of Reference for the Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committee. At a recent meeting of the Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committee there was some concern expressed that officers hadn't taken immediate action in relation to a taxi licensing matter and, given that it had been some time since both the Terms of Reference and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers were last reviewed, Members were asked to consider whether it would now be appropriate to review them, particularly

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as the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy had been in force for over 12 months.

Resolved – That, a review is undertaken of the Terms of Reference for the Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committee and Scheme of Delegation and a report is presented to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee for consideration.

LIC.235

LEGAL UPDATE

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) verbally updated Members on national licensing matters.

Resolved – That, the update is noted.

Chairman.