

LICENSING PANEL

13 January 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Philip Bicknell (Vice-Chairman), Tom Bursnall, George Bathurst, Carwyn Cox, James Evans (substitute), Jesse Grey, John Fido, Charles Hollingsworth, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Sayonara Luxton and Gary Muir.

Officers: Alan Barwise, Elaine Brown, Robert Cowan and Steve Johnson.

PART I

17/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Geoff Hill, David Hilton, Asghar Majeed and Derek Sharp.

18/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

19/14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9 October 2014 be approved subject to the following amendments:

- **On page iv, “Councillors Hunt and Hilton disagreed with this assessment believing planning to be stricter” be amended to “Councillors Hunt and Hilton disagreed with this assessment believing planning offered greater clarity”.**

20/14 HACKNEY CARRIAGE PETITION

The Panel received a report from Steve Johnson, Enforcement Principal and Alan Barwise, Licensing Manager, regarding the Hackney Carriage Petition.

The report recommended that Members consider the requests made in the petition and decide whether or not to recommend that the Community Protection and Enforcement Services Lead consult with the trade and other interested parties (including the police) about all or any of the requests.

The petition asked the Council to carry out the following:

1. Remove the requirement in the Hackney Carriage Policy and Conditions for Hackney Carriages to have a specific RBWM livery. Instead, the petition proposed that Hackney Carriages should be white in colour with a small emblem/logo permitted on the front door of the vehicle.

2. Rule that Private Hire vehicles be barred from being white in colour.
3. Permit advertising on the rear half of Hackney Carriage vehicles to promote tourism in the Royal Borough.
4. Alter the requirement in the Hackney Carriage Policy and Conditions for Hackney Carriages that relates to the age of vehicles so that replacement vehicles can be under 5 years of age when first licensed.

The Panel was addressed by Mohammed Yasin, Nasir Jarrell and Sultan Jaffery. Mr Jaffery stated that drivers did not want to extend the age of replacement vehicles from 3 years to 5 years, contrary to the petition. Mr Jarrell used a PowerPoint presentation to show Members that the livery was applied differently to different vehicles. He noted the versatility of magnetic plates. He noted that private hire vehicles were being used as hackney carriages and taking the business of true hackney carriages. He believed more enforcement was needed. Mr Yasin expressed concern that the livery was bigger than Members had agreed.

Members discussed the proposals set out in the petition. Councillor Carwyn Cox highlighted that the scheme in place was an easily identifiable brand for residents and visitors to the Borough. Councillor Tom Bursnall was of the opinion that the Council should support taxi drivers to enhance their revenue streams and was in favour of allowing advertising on taxi vehicles and the use of magnetic plates rather than a livery.

Councillor John Fido expressed concern that the policy had not been in place for long. He was against advertising on the vehicle however he noted the logo could be smaller. Councillor Sayonara Luxton believed advertising would make vehicles look tatty and go against the reason for having a livery. She also noted she did not want to see the introduction of magnetic signs which were open to abuse.

Councillor Maureen Hunt noted that the introduction of the livery improved the state of taxis. She noted the livery allowed customers to get into taxis and feel safe. She did not want the livery changed and she noted the sign was clear as it was. She also noted that advertising would allow the advertisement of gambling which was to be avoided. Councillor George Bathurst agreed with Councillor Hunt's comments relating to retaining the livery and avoiding advertising. He suggested the taxi drivers work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

Councillor Lynne Jones noted that taxis could not have advertising on the vehicle and also remove the livery to allow for executive work. She believed taxis could have one or the other but not both. Councillor Jones noted that if the livery was restricting taxi drivers from diversifying their income then it could be amended so it was not as strict. However she believed the livery needed to be retained in some form on safety grounds.

A number of Members suggested the use of advertising inside the taxi. Members did not wish place a restriction on the colour of private hire vehicles.

RESOLVED: That Members reject the proposals in the petition.

(Eleven Councillors voted in favour of the motion to reject the proposals in the petition (Councillors Bicknell, Bathurst, Cox, J Evans, Grey, Fido, Hollingsworth, Hunt, Jones, Luxton and Muir). One Councillor voted against the motion to reject the proposals in the petition (Councillor T Bursnall).

21/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the next meeting of the Licensing Panel would be 7 April 2014,

Future dates were to be confirmed once Full Council approved the programme of meetings for the next municipal year.

22/14 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 6.00pm, ended at 7.00pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....