

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE

held on 8 October 2019

Present:

	Cllr M Ali (Chairman)
Cllr M A Bridgeman	Cllr R Mohammed
Cllr G W Elson	Cllr L M N Morales
Cllr D Harlow	Cllr C Rana
Cllr R N Leach	

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee held on 11 June 2019 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Howard. In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, Cllr L Morales was appointed to the role for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor R Mohammed declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in minute items 5, Introduction of a Knowledge Test for Operators, and 6, Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets), arising from his position as a taxi operator. The interest was such that Councillor Mohammed left the Chamber during consideration of the items.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

5. INTRODUCTION OF A KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR OPERATORS

The Committee received a report on the Introduction of a Knowledge Test for Taxi Operators. Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer, stated that the implementation of such a test would ensure that applicants and existing licence holders were fully familiar with the laws surrounding their occupation. The current fees and charges were set out on page 21 of the report which were likely to be reviewed in due course.

Members considered the proposal from the Licensing Authority set out on page 7. In paragraph 4, item 6 stated that those operators who were due to renew their licences very

soon may be granted extra time to complete the test. It was agreed that this would apply to drivers with renewals due in the remainder of 2019, and so the new arrangements would be fully in force by 1 January 2020.

It was noted that interpretation assistance was available for those drivers whose first language was not English; for joint licences with two names both drivers would need to pass the test; and that it was important for all drivers to complete the test, with retakes available if required.

RESOLVED

That a requirement for an Operators Knowledge Test be implemented in order to ensure Operators are fully aware of their legal requirements, subject to the amendment that any drivers with renewals due before 1 January 2020 would be provided with extra time to complete the test.

6. INTRODUCTION OF A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL OPERATORS DOOR SIGNS TO BE VINYL STICKERS (NOT MAGNETS)

Matthew Cobb introduced the report which presented a proposed change to the Private Hire Operators licence regime, to require all Operators' Door Signs to be a semi-permanent vinyl sticker and not magnetic. Appendix 3 to the report set out an anonymised list of non-compliant vehicles spotted in the Town Centre without door signs on display.

The Committee discussed the possible effects of the change and whether the use of vinyl stickers should instead be used as a compliance tool in the event of no stickers being found to be on display. It was noted that the majority of taxi drivers did ensure that the magnetic stickers were used; and that the use of vinyl stickers would not enable them to be removed when driving for personal reasons, such as the school run.

Joanne McIntosh, Legal Services Manager, stated that the possible use of vinyl stickers as an enforcement tool required further consideration by officers outside the meeting. The Chairman proposed that the item be deferred to a future meeting, and the Committee agreed nem con.

The Committee additionally noted that Jonathan Lord MP had spoken the previous week in the House of Commons about the excellent work undertaken by the taxi community with Woking Street Angels, and that a taxi-related petition had recently been submitted and would be received by a meeting of Full Council due to the number of signatories attached.

RESOLVED

That the report be deferred.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 8.05 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____