

## LICENSING (TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE) SUB-COMMITTEE

held 8th December, 1999  
at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Fishwick (in the Chair)  
Councillors Smith, Stuart, Talukdar (for Driver) and Wilkinson

APOLOGIES: Councillor Driver

### SECTION 'B' - FUNCTIONS DELEGATED

#### Exclusion of the Public and Press

1. Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 4 and 6 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

#### Application for a Private Hire Drivers Licence - Mr. I.A.

2. The Chief Executive Officer advised the Sub-Committee that the applicant had been invited to the meeting but was not in attendance.

Resolved that the application for a Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence from Mr. I.A. be refused on the grounds that the Sub-Committee is not satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence.

#### Applications for Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences

3. The Licensing Officer reported upon the circumstances surrounding three applicants for Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences who had subsequently withdrawn their applications.

Resolved that the report be noted.

#### Driver Improvement Scheme

4. The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, the Lancashire County Council Road Safety Group gave a presentation on the Driver Improvement Scheme and the spin off schemes which have evolved recently.

The Road Safety Group ran courses aimed at occupational drivers which were capable of minor adjustment to tailor them specifically to the Taxi/Private Hire driver.

The course would be of four hours duration - two hours theory and two hours in car training and assessment at a cost of £65.00 approximately. This estimate is based on a group of 10 drivers but arrangements could be made to provide one to one training in which case the complete course would take place in the car.

At the meeting with the taxi trade on 6th October, 1999, there was only limited support for such a scheme, and significant objection to the principle of payment.

The Chief Executive Officer indicated how the scheme might be introduced and gave details of four methods of introduction.

The Sub-Committee discussed the matter in detail.

Resolved i) that the Sub-Committee agrees in principle to the establishment of a Driver Improvement Scheme for applicants for private hire and hackney carriage drivers licenses.

ii) that the Chief Executive Officer continue to discuss the issues concerned with Lancashire County Council's Road Safety Unit and to seek information on schemes operated by other Licensing Authorities.

iii) that the Chief Executive Officer submit a report to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee upon the Driver Improvement Scheme, to include suggestions for some form of incentive so as to encourage participation.

#### Vehicle Age Limit

5. The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, he was requested to submit a report upon the possibility of imposing an age limit on vehicles.

This matter was discussed at the meeting with the Taxi Trade on 6th October, 1999 and whilst there was significant opposition from the Trade, Members were concerned at the appearance and apparent general condition of taxis and private hire vehicles. If the Sub-Committee were to make a decision to introduce an age limit, the following proposal may facilitate that objective whilst reducing any immediate impact on existing drivers/vehicles.

- a. An immediate limit on new applications; such limit to be agreed by the Sub-Committee - the previous age limit was five years.
- b. All vehicles which currently have the benefit of a hackney carriage or private hire licence could be exempted from the age limit and be given, say a further three years life.
- c. Thereafter, all existing licensed vehicles to be licensed for a maximum of five years.
- d. It may be considered appropriate wish to include exemptions for purpose built hackney carriages.

The Chief Executive Officer added that whilst it would be important that the policy had immediate effect, the proposals as outlined would give significant protection to drivers/proprietors with older vehicles. The proposed exemptions would have the effect of masking any perceived improvements until such time as all the old vehicles cease to be licensed.

Resolved i) that with effect from 17th December, 1999, all new applications for private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licenses be limited to those vehicles no more than 5 years old, at the time of application.

ii) that all vehicles currently licensed as hackney carriages or private hire cars as at 17th December, 1999 be exempted from the age limit for a period of 3 years from 17th December, 1999.

iii) that purpose built hackney carriages are to be exempt from these provisions, and

iv) that all vehicles licensed as hackney carriages and private hire cars are to undergo two taxi tests per year.

#### Refunds of Vehicle Licence Fee where vehicles written off

6. The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, he was asked to report further on the suggestion from the Trade that a

refund of the vehicle licence fee should be made in cases where a vehicle is written off.

Resolved i) that a refund of the vehicle licence be allowed where a vehicle is written off, subject to the following scheme:

A refund would only be considered in circumstances where a vehicle which is written off has more than six months of its licence to run.

ii) The vehicle proprietor must provide written evidence that the vehicle has been written off, such evidence to be supplied by the insurance company.

iii) The written evidence from the insurance company referred to in (ii) above must be supplied within two months of the date of the incident which resulted in the writing off of the vehicle.

iv) The rates of refund shall be based on the following formula:-

- a) For a vehicle written off within one month of the issue of the licence - 80% refund
- b) For a vehicle written off between the first and second months of the issue of the licence - 70% refund
- c) For a vehicle written off between the second third months of the issue of the licence - 60% refund
- d) For a vehicle written off between the third and fourth months of the issue of the licence - 50% refund
- e) For a vehicle written off between the fourth and fifth months of the issue of the licence - 40% refund
- f) For a vehicle written off between the fifth and sixth months of the issue of the licence - 30% refund

(In all cases, refund to be rounded up to the nearest £5.00)

#### Exclusion of the Public and Press

7. Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

## SECTION 'A' - FUNCTIONS NOT DELEGATED

### Taxi Enforcement

8. The Chief Executive Officer submitted a private and confidential report detailing the contracted hours per week worked by the Taxi Enforcement Officer and the financial costs and other related personnel matters if the post was to be made a permanent full time position.

Resolved that this matter be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for determination, with a recommendation that provision be made in the estimates for a sum of £10,000.00 to cover enforcement on the basis of 37 hour working including car mileage allowance.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 5.20 P.M.