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LICENSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

Present: Councillor S Taylor (Chair)

Councillors A Taylor D Roberts
T Anderson J Salter
I Lewis S Niblock
G Watt R Wilkins

24 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were. No such declarations were made.

25 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2009 be approved.

26 POLLING STATION POLLING DISTRICT LC - PRENTON WARD

The Chief Executive reported upon a suggestion from a Ward Councillor for a change to the polling station for polling district LC in the Prenton Ward. The proposal was that the polling station may be better situated at Tranmere Rovers Football Ground, than at the present location at Shaftsbury Youth Club as Tranmere Rovers was more widely known, was located on a main road, was more convenient for a proportion of the polling district and would therefore attract more voters. He provided information in relation to both venues and set out the hire charge of each. Both were considered suitable for use as a polling station.

Resolved – That, in line with the request from a Ward Councillor, the polling station for polling district LC be relocated to Tranmere Rovers Football Club.

27 HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE - APPLICATION

The Director of Regeneration presented an application to license a Metrocab, registration number V601 DVU as a hackney carriage vehicle and indicated that as its licence had expired it could not be renewed and the applicant was required to follow the process for a new licence. However, as the vehicle did not comply with paragraph 2.1(v) of the hackney carriage licensing criteria, namely 'that every vehicle must be three years old or less from the date of first registration or date of manufacture (whichever is the earlier)' officers could not issue the licence under delegated authority. The Director reported that the vehicle was ten years old since its first registration.

The Director further commented that a month prior to the expiry date of the licence a renewal reminder letter had been sent to the licence holder, which indicated the date that the licence was due to expire. It stated also that there were no “days of grace” and that the licence would expire on the date given. The renewal reminder letter also advised that the application to renew had to be submitted well in advance to ensure that the licence could be renewed before it expired. He reported also that on 2 April 2009 a newsletter was sent to all hackney carriage vehicle licence holders, including the applicant, reminding them that once a hackney carriage vehicle licence had expired it could not be renewed and a new licence application would have to be made. The applicant would therefore have to comply with the terms and conditions required of the new licence. Furthermore, the vehicle would have to comply with the hackney carriage licensing criteria.

The Director set out the application and heard representations from the applicant and from his trade union representative, who had also submitted a chronology related to the application.

Members of the public left the room whilst the Committee considered the application.

The Chair advised the applicant that the Committee had considered representations from the applicant and from his trade union representative. The Committee had heard no evidence or information to justify the Council departing from its current policy of requiring a vehicle to be three years old or less from the date of manufacture or registration (whichever is the sooner) when granting a licence. Therefore, the Committee –

Resolved – (9:0) That the application to license a Metrocab, registration number V601 DVU as a hackney carriage vehicle be refused.

28 TRAINING FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

The Director of Regeneration sought approval to amend the current training requirement for both new and existing Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers, which had been in operation since 1 November 2006. He set out the proposed amendments and commented that discussions at the Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Joint Consultative Committee had identified concerns regarding the potential for inconsistency in the quality of training provided to licensed drivers. As a result of those concerns the Director proposed that should the proposed amendments be adopted a further report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee setting out a minimum standard of training to be delivered to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers on Wirral.

Resolved –

(1) That, subject to funding, the following amendments to the training requirement for both new applicants and existing Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, be approved –

(a) That all new applicants must obtain one of the following Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQ's):

- EDI Level 2 Certificate in Road Passenger Transport (Taxi and Private Hire Route)
 - Edexcel Level 2 BTEC Award in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire
- (b) That all new applicants must achieve the Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Road Passenger Vehicle Training within 12 months of being issued with a licence.
- (c) That current drivers must undertake one of the above VRQ's as a minimum requirement or the Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Road Passenger Vehicle Training no later than 30 November 2011.
- (d) That where appropriate, current drivers who are brought before the Licensing Panel in relation to disciplinary matters be required to complete appropriate training as directed by the Licensing Panel at that time.
- (2) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee setting out a minimum standard of training to be delivered to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers on Wirral.
- (3) That the Director of Regeneration be authorised to approve such other similar Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQ's) to the training requirement as he considers appropriate.

29 **WIRRAL PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Director of Regeneration presented the minutes of the meetings of the Wirral Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Joint Consultative Committee held on 10 February, 2 June and 8 September 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

The Chair approved consideration of the following matter as an item of urgent business.

30 **PETITION - UPDATE**

Councillor I Lewis requested an update in relation to a petition of 227 signatories that he had submitted to the Council on 12 October 2009, on behalf of hackney carriage licence holders and/or proprietors requesting an urgent review of supply and demand for Hackney Vehicle Licences. The Director of Regeneration indicated that a report in relation to the petition would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

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