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LICENSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 November 2010

Present:

Councillor S Taylor (Chair)

Councillors

G Ellis
WJ Davies
S Niblock
T Anderson
I Lewis

K Wood
D Roberts
J Salter
R Wilkins

22 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any items on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor Ian Lewis declared a personal interest in item 12 - Independent Assessment of the Supply and Demand for Hackney Carriage Vehicles On Wirral (see minute 31 post) by virtue of him having presented the petition.

Councillor Sue Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in respect of item 9 -Wirral Award (see minute 30 post) by virtue of being a Member of the Wirral Award Working Party.

23 MINUTES

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September, 2010 be amended and submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

24 FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

The Interim Chief Executive reported upon a proposal to award Mr Stephen Maddox the honour of the Freedom of the Borough for his exceptional contribution to the Borough.

RECOMMENDED - That this Committee recommend to the Council that Mr Stephen Maddox OBE be awarded the honour of the Freedom of the Borough of Wirral.

25 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE - APPLICATION TO LICENSE A METROCAB**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported upon an application to license a Metrocab, registration number V601 DVU as a hackney carriage vehicle.

It was reported that as the vehicle did not strictly comply with paragraph 2(v) of the hackney carriage licensing criteria, “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 age of the vehicle since first registration was 11 years.

The applicant attended the meeting together with his Trade Union representative Mr McIntyre. The applicant was unable to present the vehicle to the Committee as it was currently stored off-road. The vehicle had not been tested at any of the Council’s authorised testing stations and was not taxed or insured due to the financial implications of undertaking these matters. A Licensing Officer had inspected the vehicle in order to verify photographs of both the interior and exterior of the vehicle submitted by the applicant. The photographs were available for Members to consider at the meeting.

Mr McIntyre explained to Members why the applicant wished to license the Metrocab.

Mr McIntyre responded to questions from Members of the Committee.

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

In determining the matter the Committee had considered representations from the applicant and from his trade union representative. Members of 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.

Resolved (7:3) - That the application to license a Metrocab, registration number V601 DVU be refused.

26 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE - APPLICATION TO LICENSE A CARBODIES TAXI**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported upon an application to license a Carbodies Taxi, registration number L578 HHV as a hackney carriage vehicle.

It was reported that as the vehicle did not strictly comply with paragraph 2(v) of the hackney carriage licensing criteria, “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 age of the vehicle since first registration was 16 years.

The applicant attended the meeting with his vehicle which Members of the Committee inspected. The vehicle had not been tested at any of the Council's authorised testing stations, but did have a current MOT and was taxed and insured.

The applicant advised Members that the vehicle was fuelled by LPG which made it the most economical, efficient and environmentally friendly taxi around and had submitted literature in support of this.

The applicant responded to questions from Members of the Committee.

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

In determining the matter the Committee had considered representations from the applicant and taken into consideration that the vehicle runs on LPG. The Committee had heard no evidence or information however 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.

Resolved (10:0) - That the application to license a Carbodies Taxi, registration number L578 HHV be refused.

27 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported upon a request to amend hackney carriage tariffs subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process.

The request had been made to increase the hackney carriage fares at a meeting of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Joint Consultative Committee on 16 September 2010 by the Liscard Hackney Carriage Association. The Director provided details of the tariff that had been proposed.

The Director reported that the proposal must be advertised for a period of fourteen days should Members approve the proposed increase and if no objections were received the revised tariff would become effective in December 2010, however, any objections received would be reported back to this Committee for consideration.

Members of the hackney carriage trade present were invited to speak however no-one came forward at the meeting.

Chris Jordan, Managing Director of Wirral Satellite Cars was in attendance and responded to questions from Members of the Committee.

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

Resolved - That the increase in Hackney Carriage Tariffs be advertised for public consultation in line with the request from the Liscard Hackney Carriage Association.

28 TRAINING FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided an update on funding available to support training for hackney carriage and private hire drivers.

Tony Norbury, Merseylearn attended the meeting and gave a presentation which updated Members regarding training and funding available for drivers.

The Chair thanked Mr Norbury for his presentation and stated that this Committee was committed to raising standards for the Borough.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked if any independent assessments had been carried out on the training that had been undertaken.

Mr Norbury reported that Go Skills undertook this type of work and that he could report any responses back to this Committee.

Resolved -

(1) That the report be noted and that there be no changes to the training requirements for hackney carriage and private hire drivers at present.

(2) That the Licensing Officer bring a further report back to this Committee regarding numbers of current drivers undertaking the NVQ.

29 LICENSING BUDGET

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report providing Members with an update of a review of One Stop Shop recharges to the Licensing Budget in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing.

Members were advised that further to a report being submitted to this Committee at the meeting held on 13 September 2010, discussions had taken place with the Finance Department.

The report provided details on how the calculations were met and set out the methodology used in the calculations.

The Chair thanked the Head of Regulation and the Licensing Manager for the report.

Mr N Kent, Finance Department attended the meeting and responded to questions from Members.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

30 **WIRRAL AWARD 2010**

The Chair declared a prejudicial interest in this matter by virtue of being a Member of the Wirral Award Working Party and left the room during its consideration.

Councillor Tom Anderson, Vice-Chair of the Committee in the Chair.

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management presented for consideration the recommendations of the Wirral Award Working Party held on 13 October 2010. The Wirral Award was intended to confer civic recognition upon individuals or organisations resident or located in Wirral for outstanding achievement within the previous twelve months, or for distinguished service to the Borough over a period of twenty years or more.

It was reported that once nominations had been agreed a presentation ceremony and formal dinner would be held.

Resolved - That the Wirral Award 2010 be conferred on the following recipients recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party, and the suggested arrangements be agreed:

- **John Moffat**
- **Brenda Thompson**
- **Susan Nicholson**
- **Joan Cook**
- **Carolyne Hankey**
- **Frank Morris**
- **Peter Spindler**
- **Margaret Delaney**
- **Doreen Cooke**
- **Jo Wood**

31 **INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES ON WIRRAL**

Councillor Ian Lewis declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of him having presented the petition.

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided a report to enable Members to appoint an independent consultant to undertake an assessment of the supply and demand for Hackney Carriage Vehicles on Wirral.

It was reported that on 28 July 2010 Members of this Committee authorised officers to proceed with a tender for the independent investigation into the supply and demand for Hackney Carriage Vehicles on Wirral. In response to the advertisement made, three companies had submitted proposals for undertaking the work.

The Licensing Manager responded to questions from Members.

It was proposed by Councillor Steve Niblock and seconded by Councillor Sue Taylor that -

“Halcrow be appointed to undertake an assessment of the supply and demand for Hackney Carriage Vehicles on Wirral.”

Resolved (10:0) - That Halcrow be appointed to undertake an assessment of the supply and demand for Hackney Carriage Vehicles on Wirral.