

Licensing and Safety Committee

Wednesday, 28 February 2007

Present: Councillor Mrs Iris Smith (Chair), Councillor Edward Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Henry Counce, Magda Cullens, David Dickinson, Doreen Dickinson, Anthony Gee, Daniel Gee, Keith Iddon, Hasina Khan, Margaret Lees, Marion Lowe, Thomas McGowan, Ralph Snape and Mrs Stella Walsh

07.LS.12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Thomas Bedford and John Walker.

07.LS.13 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

Councillor Ralph Snape declared an interest in relation to Item 10 on the agenda (Minute 07.LS.21).

07.LS.14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Safety Committee held on 17 January 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

07.LS.15 TRAINING FOR HACKNEY/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS-FURTHER REPORT

Further to Minute 06.LS.20 (7 June 2006) the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services submitted a report on a proposal to introduce vocational training for all new applicants for hackney carriage and private hire driver licences.

At the meeting of 7 June 2006 it was recommended that a report be submitted to this Committee giving details of other providers of driver training, showing comparisons with other local authorities and costs to the trade.

The report indicated that the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee in its good practice guide 2003, emphasised the need for driver training for taxi drivers in dealing with disabled people. In a speech by the Transport Minister it was indicated that best practice should be that driver training should be done and that in future, licensing authorities might stipulate that those applying for their first licences should undergo a certain amount of training.

The Department of Transport in a best practice guidance (October 2006) had stated that there was an advantage in encouraging drivers to obtain a nationally recognised vocational qualification for the hackney and private hire trades.

Research conducted by officers since the meeting on 7 June 2006 had indicated that no other suitable training courses were currently available and that there was no suitable alternative to the BTEC course at Runshaw College.

Preston City Council had agreed to make the BTEC training with Runshaw College as a provider and mandatory for all new drivers from 1 April 2007 to undertake the course with South Ribble Borough Council are also considering adopting this option.

Representatives from Runshaw College attended the meeting outlining the syllabus for the BTEC course being offered. The Committee also received from a representative from Preston City Council, the reasons why the authority had decided to make the course mandatory and its implementation.

RESOLVED – That the item be deferred to a future meeting pending further consideration and referring it to the next Taxi Liaison Panel.

07.LS.16 DRIVERS MEDICALS-PROPOSED CHANGE OF PROCEDURE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services on a proposal to change the current requirement for all medicals for hackney carriage and private hire drivers to be conducted by the applicant's family doctor.

The report indicated that when the requirement to use the applicant's family doctor was introduced, the cost of medicals was considered reasonable however since that time the cost had escalated and it was clear that medical practitioners were charging fees that were considerably more than when the medical rules were introduced and causing hardship amongst some applicants.

The Committee received presentation from a representative from a low priced medical firm which had advertised a country wide service for carrying out medicals for taxi drivers as well as medicals for bus and lorry drivers. The company had become established as the UK's biggest provider of medical examinations for DVLA and taxi licences. The DVLA accepted medical examinations by registered medical practitioners and did not specify that the examination must be by the applicants own doctor.

RESOLVED –That the rules regarding drivers' medicals be changed to allow medical examinations to be conducted by any registered medical practitioner.

07.LS.17 LICENSING AND REGISTRATION LICENCES ISSUED FROM 23 DECEMBER 2006 TO 31 JANUARY 2007

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services on the various licences and permits issued and the registrations affected by the Licensing Section between the period 23 December 2006 and 31 January 2007.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.LS.18 LICENSING LIAISON PANEL

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Liaison Panel held on 29 January 2007.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.LS.19 ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT

The Chairman notified members that the Licensing Manager, Howard Bee, would be leaving the authority in the near future. The Chairman and Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for his contribution and assistance he had given to the Committee.

07.LS.20 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

07.LS.21 APPLICATION FOR LICENCE TO DRIVE HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF CHORLEY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services requesting the Committee to consider an application for a licence to drive Hackney Carriages/Private Hire vehicles within the Borough of Chorley.

The applicant (Mr GS) had been invited to attend the meeting but neither himself nor his representative attended.

RESOLVED – That the consideration of the application be adjourned to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 28 March 2007 to allow an opportunity for the applicant and his representative to give representations.

(Councillor R Snape declared an interest in the above item and left the room during the discussions and voting)

07.LS.22 APPLICATION FOR LICENCE TO DRIVE HACKNEY CARRIAGES/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF CHORLEY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services requesting the Committee to consider an application to drive a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle. Information received from the Criminal Records Bureau had revealed information that would need to be assessed by the Committee before determining the application.

The applicant (Mr AT) had not held a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence before this application and had failed to disclose that he had any convictions when he applied for a licence.

The applicant attended the meeting to put forward representations in support of his application and the Committee carefully considered the representations made.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Licensing and Safety Committee took a very serious view of his failure to declare convictions, however, after careful consideration of his representations, agreed to grant him a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence.

2) That a written warning be sent to him reminding him of his responsibility and that he be advised that his conduct must be exemplary.

07.LS.23 APPLICATION TO DRIVE HACKNEY CARRIAGES/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF CHORLEY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services requesting the Committee to consider an application to drive Hackney Carriages/Private Hire Vehicles. Information received from the driver and Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) had revealed information that will determine that the grant of a licence would only be made by the Committee.

The report indicated that the applicant (Mr CP) had 6 penalty points/endorsements on his licence. The applicant attended the meeting to put forward his representations in support of the application and the Committee carefully considered the representations made.

RESOLVED – That a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence be granted to Mr CP for a probationary period of six months AND subject to a DVLA check after the six months, officers to renew his licence.

Chair