

LICENSING LIAISON PANEL – 4 February 2008

PRESENT Councillor Iris Smith, Councillor Edward Smith, Stephen Culleton, Bob Beeston, Janet Brereton, Dave Leadbetter (MAPS), Sergeant Tony Bushell, Brian Crompton, Phil and Lynne Cooper, David Hamer, Peter Verhaege, Yaqoob Illahi, Mazaffar Hussain, Abdul Manan, Mohammed Siddique, Nick Hogan, Paul Mulhearn, Hifzur Mala

1 APOLOGIES: Antony Price (Yellow Cabs)

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING:

2.1 Traffic Lights at Hartwood Roundabout – Janet Brereton had written to Lancashire County Council on 8 January 2008 to ask about the traffic lights being made vehicle actuation at night. To date a reply has not been received. Janet Brereton to chase up and place the matter on the agenda for the next Licensing Liaison Panel.

2.2 Pavement Design Guide – Janet Brereton explained that Keith Allen, the Council's Streetscene Manager, was now administering the Pavement Cafe Design Guide. A panel member said that he had not received a copy of the design guide and Janet Brereton agreed to get one sent out to him. The issue regarding Fazakerley Street was raised and Janet Brereton agreed to chase this up.

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW TEMPORARY LICENSING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Councillor Iris Smith introduced Bob Beeston, the new temporary Licensing Enforcement Officer. Bob Beeston explained that he was a retired police officer who was looking to ensure the Licensing system ran smoothly. He said he would be happy to address any problems and deal with any reasonable requests.

4 SIGNS – INTERNAL/EXTERNAL/REAR PLATE

Bob Beeston informed the panel that the Licensing section was looking at the signage currently being used by the hackney carriage/private hire vehicles to identify them as licensed vehicles. Some of the things currently being looked at are the provision of internal signage to identify the vehicle for members of the public, door signs and producing rear plates with an expiry date to end the problem of expired plates not being returned to the Licensing Section. Discussion followed and it was agreed that a separate working party take place with a small number of representatives from the trade being invited. This meeting has now been arranged for Monday 10 March 2008 at 10.30am at Civic Offices, Union Street, Chorley and invitations will be sent out in due course.

5 FEES AND CHARGES

Copies of the fees and charges, which will apply from 1 April 2008, were handed out. Steve Culleton explained that there was no discretion with those fees connected to the Licensing Act 2003. He pointed out that the fees and charges were broadly in line with inflation at 3% and that whilst we are legally entitled to cover the costs of providing the licensing service, at present costs were not being fully met. Steve Culleton explained that he was also looking at streamlining the licensing services the

Council provide and make internal savings where possible. A panel member said that a recent licence renewal carried out in the One Stop Shop had taken over 30 minutes to complete. Steve Culleton said that he had met with the Customer Services Manager recently to address improvements in service delivery. He said that he was hoping to minimise the number of visits to the One Stop Shop and some additional training would be provided over the next couple of months. Discussion followed regarding the fees and charges and it was agreed that the charge for a replacement tariff could be looked at again and reviewed along with the signs and plates. It was also noted that the discount for disabled access vehicles had been deleted as it had not attracted as many disabled access vehicles.

6 UNMET DEMAND SURVEY/DISABLED DISCRIMINATION ACT

Steven Culleton informed the panel that an unmet demand survey was now due and asked whether the panel required the Council to appoint a firm to carry out the survey. He said that the survey would need to be paid for by the trade and initial costings suggested that the survey would cost each driver a one-off payment of approximately £280. Discussion on the previous survey and the pros and cons of it took place. It was agreed that the Licensing Section write to every hackney carriage proprietor to ask whether or not they required the Council to carry out an unmet demand survey. A panel member said that any survey should combine a wheelchair accessible survey.

7 GENERAL CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

7.1 Second Driver's Licences – Janet Brereton explained that the way second driver's licences are issued was changing. On first application, an applicant could decide whether or not they wanted a hackney carriage driver's licence and a private hire driver's licence. At that point, the first licence would be full price (currently £45) and the second driver's licence would attract a lesser fee (currently £21). However, if an applicant took out one licence and then decided at a later date that he wished to have an additional licence, the price for the grant of a licence would be payable and not for the lesser fee. Furthermore, if an applicant's CRB check had been carried out over 3 months ago, a new CRB would be required before a licence could be issued. Any driver who currently had two licences which expired on different dates could benefit from the lesser fee if, on renewal of the first licence to expire, the second one was also renewed but issued to expire on the same date as the first licence.

7.2 Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Checks – Janet Brereton informed everyone that it was best practice for local authorities to carry out CRB checks every three years. Therefore, to bring this in, drivers would be asked to complete a CRB form and pay the required fee (currently £36) if at the time their licence was due for renewal, the CRB was older than three years old. Drivers would be informed when their renewal letters were sent out that a CRB will be required and an application form enclosed with the renewal letter. Provided that a CRB has been applied for, a renewal licence could still be issued, but it would be necessary to make an appointment with the Licensing Section for the CRB and accompanying documentation to be checked.

7.3 New applicants for private hire/hackney carriage drivers – Janet Brereton explained that to streamline the procedure for applying for a licence to drive private hire and/or hackney carriages, changes had been made to the way applications would be made. An information sheet is attached to these notes (Appendix A). It was noted that in future, applications should include an application form, CRB form, medical, appropriate fees and a knowledge test. This would reduce the number of

visits being made to the Council offices for new applicants. It was agreed that the above changes would be communicated to hackney proprietors and private hire operators within the next week.

7.4 LPG/Provision of MOTs/garages meeting needs/classification of vehicles – Bob Beeston said that he had been asked to look at these issues and that the Licensing Section would be asking for installation certificates to show that LPG conversions had been carried out in the correct manner. He asked if owners of LPG vehicles could produce their installation/safety check certificate when renewing their vehicle licences so that this could be recorded with the vehicle's details. He also said that the Licensing Section would be requesting the VOSA MOT certificate at the time that private hire vehicles and hackney carriages were licensed, renewed or transferred. He asked whether the testing stations were meeting the needs of the drivers and said that he would welcome views on any improvements which could be made to the way tests are currently carried out.

7.5 Guidelines on convictions – Steve Culleton said that he had been revising and updating the current guidelines on convictions. He explained that this would aid applicants by making them aware of the guidelines and assist Members of the Licensing and Safety Committee when they have to make decisions regarding applications for hackney or private hire drivers.

8 TRIAL OF CAMERA IN VEHICLE

Bob Beeston said that an offer had been made by a private firm to trial a camera in a licensed vehicle for around 6/7 weeks to improve driver safety. He pointed out that there were two systems, but the wireless system meant that no holes needed to be drilled. He invited people to get in touch with him if interested.

9 COMPLAINT FROM CUSTOMER OF BOOTH'S SUPERMARKET

Janet Brereton said that she had received a complaint from a lady who claimed that two hackney carriage drivers had refused to take her and her shopping because she was only going a short distance. Representatives from the hackney carriage trade said that they would take this back to proprietors and remind them of their obligations.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Pub Watch - The representative from Pub Watch said he welcomed the recent application for a new Premises Licence at a town centre venue. He hoped that the licence holder would become a pro-active member of Pub Watch and looked forward to working with her.

10.2 Parking – a panel member asked whether it would be possible to implement 'pay on return' parking. Councillor Iris Smith said that she would ask the Executive Member in charge of parking issues, Councillor Peter Malpas to attend the next meeting of the Licensing Liaison Panel to discuss parking. She informed the panel that parking fees were to change with alterations being made to the charges for 2/3 hours. Janet Brereton agreed to contact Councillor Malpas and invite him to the next panel.

10.3 Sounding Horns outside public houses – a panel member reminded drivers that they should not be sounding horns outside public houses when waiting for their fare. It causes nuisance to neighbouring residents and the Highway Code states

you must not use your horn while stationary on the road or when driving in a built up area between the hours of 11.30pm and 7.00am

10.4 Parking on taxi rank at High Street – Bob Beeston had been made aware of these issues and had looked into possible remedies. He explained that the police were able to issue fixed penalty notices and he had spoken to Becky Herbert, the new Town Centre Community Beat officer, concerning this. Bob Beeston agreed to write to the police on this matter. The Hackney Carriage representatives thanked him for his input and Councillor Iris Smith said that it would be helpful if the hackney carriage trade continue to monitor it.

10.5 Sign at roundabout at head of taxi rank, High Street – A request was made for a sign to ask people to use the footpath instead of crossing over the roundabout. Janet Brereton agreed to take this to the next Town Centre Working Party which was due to take place on 6 February 2008.

10.6 Production of log book - A panel member pointed out that when the Licensing Section request sight of the log book where a vehicle is older than 4 years old, it is not always possible to produce it. Bob Beeston agreed to look into this issue.

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting has been arranged for Monday 31 March 2008 at 10.30am in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley.