

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 3rd April, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor B Selby in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, J Dunn, B Flynn,
M Harland, G Hyde, A Khan, C Townsley,
G Wilkinson, A Garthwaite, K Groves and
J Pryor

98 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

99 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items identified where it was considered necessary to exclude the press or public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

100 Late Items

The Committee accepted the inclusion of a late item of business onto the agenda "Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Taxi Watch Scheme". Members were informed that this was a joint initiative between British Transport Police, Network Rail and the Unite Union for a Taxi Watch scheme to discourage anti – social behaviour directed at taxi drivers and should be considered without delay. (Minute No. 109 referred)

The Chair also accepted the inclusion of Supplementary Information in respect of Item No. 8 "Unmet Demand Survey: Provision of Hackney Carriage Proprietor Licences". It was reported that appendices 1 – 6 of the submitted report were not available at the time of the agenda publication and it was considered that the information now submitted would provide more in depth details of the item to be considered (Minute No. 105 refers)

101 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests made at the meeting.

102 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: R Downes and B Gettings.

103 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th March 2018 were submitted for accuracy and approval.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th March 2018 were accepted as a true and correct record.

104 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no issues raised under matters arising.

105 Unmet Demand Survey: Provision of Hackney Carriage Proprietor Licences

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out the results of the Unmet Demand Survey and sought the views of the Committee as to whether there was a need to change the existing policy to restrict the number of Hackney Carriage Proprietor licences in Leeds, and, if so, whether the number of currently issued licences needs to change in response to the results of the survey.

Appended to the report was a copy of “Leeds City Council, March 2018, Unmet Demand Survey. (Appendix 1 referred).

The Chair introduced and welcomed Ian Millership, CTS Traffic & Transportation Consultants who had undertaken the unmet demand survey on behalf of the City Council.

Addressing the report the Mr Millership spoke in respect of the following:

- Local background and context
- Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)
- General public views
- Key stakeholder consultation
- Trade stakeholder views
- Evaluation of unmet demand and its significance
- Summary, synthesis and study conclusions
- Recommendations

Members noted the following key conclusions:

- There was no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent which was significant at this point in time in the Leeds City Council licensing area.
- The committee had the option of retaining the current limit, at the current level, and should be able to defend this if necessary.
- The current station provision including the trade supported feeder system should continue and be encouraged

- The good working relationships between the trade and council should continue
- That opportunities for further development and continued improvement of the offer provided by hackney carriages in the City be considered.
- Ensure the trade, police and council (both licensing and highway) provide clarity about the Call Lane area in terms of night rank provision.
- Further consideration is required to provide better disability access to the rank at the station.
- Great care was required with application of the Clean Air legislation to ensure the current number of hackney carriage vehicles remained available for servicing all ranks.
- Some of the further out feeder ranks could be considered for provision of rest facilities, such as those available in London near to the DfT building.
- DfT BPG recommends where limits are retained that further surveys should be undertaken within three years.
- A suggestion that one main rank data collection exercise be undertaken after Easter covering at least 500 hours of observation and at least two suburban locations, with seasonal variation concerns perhaps covered by undertaking surveys at the top three ranks (including the station) for 72-hour periods, which could form part of the next unmet demand survey.
- Consider the monitoring system used in Edinburgh of having regular short period surveys covering key locations where there might be unmet demand. This could also be used alongside rank development programmes to test their impact, such as to ensure proper provisions with regard to the Call Lane night life.

Commenting on Wheelchair Assessable Vehicles (WAV's) Members queried if there were sufficient numbers operating within the city.

In responding Mr Millership said Leeds had the right proportion of Wheelchair Assessable Vehicles.

It was suggested that a common theme raised by disabled passengers was the long delays in waiting for a WAV

Mr Millership said that WAV's were often based within the city centre and passengers requesting WAV's from the outer areas could occasionally experience some delay in service. Mr Millership said it was important that customers had the ability to complain and be made aware that providing accurate details and evidence was essential.

In drawing the discussion to a conclusion the Chair welcomed the report suggesting that Members appeared to be supportive of its conclusions/ recommendations.

On the issue of Hackney Carriage Proprietor licences, Members were content with the existing limit of 537.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the Unmet Demand Survey (March 2018) be noted and welcomed
- (ii) To continue with the Council's current policy to limit the number of Hackney Carriage Proprietor licences at 537

106 Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Report by Transport for London (TfL)

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of a report prepared for Transport for London (TfL) which puts forward recommendations for new legislation to address cross-border hiring by taxi and private hire vehicles.

The report sought the views of this Committee and support for TfL's recommendations for new legislation to tackle cross border hiring.

Appended to the report was correspondence from Transport for London (TfL) which set out their proposals for resolving cross border hiring. (Appendix 1 referred).

Addressing the report the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Manager said that Leeds had established itself as a city of strong licensing and enforcement practice. However, the progress nationally via Local Government Association (LGA) and in parliament to achieve higher minimum standards and stronger enforcement powers had been slow, in comparison with the increase in cross border hiring and use of smartphone app bookings.

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Manager said the report prepared by TfL suggested that authorities need to raise their efforts in lobbying for the essential legislative changes, and this council had an opportunity to join TfL in influencing central government.

In the discussion that ensued Members were generally supportive of the proposals put forward by TfL, commenting it was a good start but more detailed work was required. The view was expressed by a number of Members that cross-border working was fundamentally wrong and that the primary legislation required re-framing.

In drawing the discussion to a conclusion the Chair suggested that Members appeared to be supportive of the TfL proposals and that it may also be beneficial to seek the support of all Leeds MPs.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted

- (ii) To support Transport for London's recommendations for new legislation to tackle cross border hiring as described in section 3.3 of the submitted report, subject to understanding the detail of the suggested start or finish requirement as this proposal is developed.
- (iii) That the report be circulated to all Leeds Members of Parliament requesting their assistance in supporting the recommendations put forward by TfL.

107 Licensing Committee Work Programme

Members considered the contents of the Licensing Committee Work Programme.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the Licensing Committee Work Programme for 2018 be approved

108 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting will take place on Friday 25th May 2018 at 10.00am in the Civic Hall, Leeds.

109 Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Taxi Watch scheme

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report which set out details of a joint initiative between British Transport Police, Network Rail and the Unite Union for the establishment of a Taxi Watch Scheme to discourage anti – social behaviour directed at taxi drivers.

Appended to the report were copies of the windscreen stickers and leaflets in support of the initiative (Appendix 1 referred).

Addressing the report the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Manager informed Members that the purpose of the initiative was to raise awareness of anti – social behaviour and abuse towards taxi drivers with a view to reducing and preventing it.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To support the Taxi Watch Scheme and approve the proposed stickers for rear passenger windows and leaflets when distributed in taxi vehicles for the duration of the scheme.