



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 12th December 2024

LICENSING AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION COMMITTEE

6th November 2024 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Goodwin (in the Chair)

Councillors Augusta, Bonner, Boyd, Emmerson, Hasthorpe, Kaczmarek, Mill, Pettigrew and K. Swinburn,

Officers in attendance:

- Adrian Moody (Licensing and Environmental Protection Manager)
- Sophie Pickerden (Committee Support Officer)
- Tracey Cook (Senior Licensing Officer)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Legal Services Service Manager (Consultancy) & Deputy Monitoring Officer)

There were 5 members of the public and one member of the press in attendance at the meeting.

L.10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence from this meeting were received.

L.11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

L.12 MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing and Community Protection Committee meeting held on 11th September 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

LIMIT ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE NUMBERS

The committee considered a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure outlining the options for the review of North East Lincolnshire Council's current policy to limit the number of Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed in the Borough. Mr Moody introduced the report and explained that the review was required to be undertaken by the Department for Transport as per their best practice guidance. Mr Moody stated that the review was a complicated and sensitive issue and that whilst passengers were the priority, it was important to also support the trade. He said that overall, it was felt that the recommendations as outlined in the report, would be compliant with best practice as outlined by the Department for Transport, would enhance the fleet, set the bar higher for entry into the trade and would not put costs on current drivers.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on any matters.

Mr Crouch spoke on behalf of the Hackney Carriage Association. He said that working as a taxi driver was not the bonanza that some people thought it was. Mr Crouch explained that people were not using taxis as much as they once were, and the trade tended to only be busy on a Saturday evening. Mr Crouch stated that Hull had 230 Hackney Carriage drivers for its population of 270,000 and North East Lincolnshire had 220 Hackney Carriage drivers for its population of 158,000, so there were plenty of Hackney Carriage drivers for the area. Mr Crouch said that the unmet demand survey had been conducted since 2010 and he strongly recommended that the survey was undertaken again as that would be the fairest way of the committee reaching a decision on the matter and would show if there was unmet demand in the area. He said that a Hackney Carriage licenced plate was worth about £10,000 twenty-five years ago, but that was not the case now and you would be lucky to transfer a Hackney Carriage wheelchair accessible plate for £500.00. Mr Crouch concluded that it would be ludicrous of North East Lincolnshire Council to remove the limit on Hackney Carriage licences being issued as there would be nowhere for all of the drivers to go. He stated that at the Freeman Street rank, for three hours work, he did three jobs and earned a total of £13.00.

There was a discussion about the cost of an unmet demand survey and the data it would provide, particularly in relation to wheelchair access vehicle demand in the area. Mr Moody stated that the more specific the survey was, the more it would cost. Councillor Mill sought clarification that the trade would pay for the unmet demand survey. Mr Moody responded that they had in previous years and that would be the case if a decision to undertake another unmet demand survey was agreed.

Councillor Mill proposed that recommendations one and two within the report be deferred to allow for an unmet demand survey to be

undertaken, which would provide evidence on the demand for taxis in North East Lincolnshire. He stated that he would like the survey to also show the demand for wheelchair access taxis. Councillor Augusta seconded the proposal.

Mr Moody stated that the procurement report would come back to the Licensing and Community Protection Committee for consideration. He stated that it would not be appropriate to undertake the survey now due to the ongoing works in Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

Several members expressed their support for recommendation three to be approved as outlined in the report.

Councillor Mill amended his proposal to include that recommendation three be approved. Councillor Augusta agreed to the amendment.

The proposal was unanimously supported by committee members.

RESOLVED –

1. That recommendations one and two, as outlined in the report now submitted, be deferred to allow for an unmet demand survey to be undertaken.
2. That the current exemption from North East Lincolnshire Council's Hackney Carriage Vehicle Policy, which allowed Wheel Chair Accessible Vehicles to be replaced for a saloon type vehicle on written application from any person with a Hackney Carriage vehicle licence who had been granted an exemption from carrying passengers in wheelchairs under Section 36 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 due to a medical condition, be removed.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.