

TAXI LICENSING REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members to consider the recommendations of the Taxi Licensing Review Sub-Committee as they affect the licensing function of the Council in terms of Pre-Licensing Standards and Conditions.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This Committee set up a Sub-Committee in July 2002 in order to review all the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and Driver functions. This was a wide-ranging review also encompassing operational issues associated with taxi licensing. This report covers all issues raised except those involving staffing of the Hackney Carriage Office which is the subject of a separate report to Policy and Finance Committee on 10 September.
- 2.2 The first of the Sub-Committee Meetings was held on 17 July when it was agreed that a consultation exercise should be conducted with drivers and operators and where written submissions on the Sub-Committee's proposals would be considered before 1 August. Around 30 drivers responded and one of the Members of the Sub-Committee analysed and summarised the results of that exercise. This is shown at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Sub-Committee met on three further occasions through August to deliberate on the following:-
- Fare Structure and Effective Date
 - Staffing (see report to Policy and Finance Committee)
 - Taxi Ranks
 - Drivers Knowledge Test
 - Criminal Record Bureau Driver Checks
 - Limits on plateholding viz-a-viz wheelchair accessible vehicles
 - Invitation for other licensing authorities to conduct a peer review of Rochford's proposals (see later paragraphs)
 - Driver training and a request for free accommodation
 - Signage and advertising

- Fees and Charges for Licensing Services
 - Non-publicity of the Notes of the Taxi Fora meetings of 23/25 January 2002
 - Vehicles and Drivers Pre-licensing Standards and Conditions
 - Contract Vehicle Licensing
- 2.4 The Chairman of the Sub-Committee paid tribute to the work of its Members who had delivered a comprehensive review in a short timescale.

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 The Minutes of the Meetings constitute the recommendations to this Committee which are rationalised and summarised at the end of this report.
- 3.2 If agreed at this meeting certain changes need to be formally advertised to enable objections to be considered. This will be undertaken as soon as practicably possible after this meeting.

4 PEER REVIEW

- 4.1 At its initial Meeting the Sub-Committee indicated that they were impressed by the style and simplicity of the Standards and Conditions of Maldon and Uttlesford District Councils and Members thought that there was merit in asking those licensing authorities and our neighbouring authority, Castle Point Borough Council, to join in a peer review of any newly proposed changes. Maldon were unable to participate but Basildon District Council agreed to substitute.
- 4.2 The tightness of the timetable and length of the Standards and Conditions means that the review will not be concluded until 4 September. If time permits, the Head of Service intends to have the result of the peer review delivered to the Members of this Committee prior to the meeting. Alternatively, a verbal report will be given at the Committee.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES

- (1) That the Council does not provide free accommodation for driver training but would expect to know details of the training.
- (2) That there be no change to the current provision for vehicles to carry signage/advertising, subject to compliance with laws and there being no detriment to the Council's conditions.
- (3) That the review of charges for licensing functions dovetail into the 2003/4 budget process with the proviso that the service be self-financing.
- (4) That the Notes of the 23/25 January 2002 consultation meetings not be made public.
- (5) That the 2002/03 Hackney Carriage Fare Review be effective from 1 October 2002 (subject to the advertisement process) and as set out on the appendix to this report.
- (6) That Council note the support received from local MP's in an attempt to speed up Criminal Record Bureau checks on drivers.
- (7) That Hackney Carriage Pre-licensing Standards
 Hackney Carriage Licensing Conditions
 Private Hire Pre-licensing Standard
 Private Hire Licensing Conditions
 Driver Pre-licensing Standard
 Driver Licensing Conditions

Be agreed as set out in the Minutes of the Taxi Licensing Review Sub-Committee of 19 August 2002 as amended by Minute 10(1)(2) and (3) of Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee of 27 August (these documents run to 24 pages and have been placed in the Members' Lounge for perusal).

- (8) That the Head of Service reports to Policy and Finance Committee on 10 September 2002 concerning
 - Delivery of a cost-neutral Hackney Carriage Licensing function
 - Adequate staffing levels to cover all administration and enforcement.
 - Integration with other transport-related functions.

- (9) That the Knowledge Test and pass rate as attached to the Minutes of 27 August 2002 be adopted (copy in Members Lounge)
- (10) That taxi stands be created as follows, subject to the usual consultation process:-
- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| 7 bay Stand | - | High Street, Rayleigh on the outside of existing taxi lagoon |
| 2 bay Stand | - | High Street, Rayleigh outside 12 – 16 High Street operational 6pm to 6am daily |
| 3 bay Stand | - | London Hill, Rayleigh outside British Legion Hall operational 6pm to 6am daily |
| 2 bay Stand | - | North Street, Rochford outside 12 – 18 (Rochford Congregational Church) |
| 3 bay Stand | - | Back Lane, Rochford in Car Park on Western Boundary by Renouf's Hotel (N.B. – to achieve this it will be necessary to amend the District of Rochford Off – Street Parking Places Order removing these spaces for parking) |
- (11) That the District of Rochford Off Street Parking Places Order be amended to facilitate (10) above.
- (12) That the Head of Service bring a further report to the next meeting of this Committee with proposals to supplement the existing three taxi stands in Hockley Town Centre.
- (13) That contract vehicles may be licensed in a private hire environment without the need for a taximeter or signage, and without the word 'TAXI' appearing anywhere on the vehicle or

Operated in a Hackney Carriage environment with an operating
taximeter and signage.

Steve Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Steve Clarkson on:-

Tel:- 01702 318005

E-Mail:- steve.clarkson@rochford.gove.uk

9 RECEIVED FROM SOUTHEND DRIVERS 21 RECEIVED FROM ROCHFORD DRIVERS

SOUTHEND NUMBERS	COMMENTS	ROCHFORD NUMBERS
1	Fares transport index	2
1	Age of vehicles registered	4
	RDC Hackney Office - Poor	2
1	Ranking shortage	6
3	Against part time working	2
	Clear English	1
2	Peer groups Basildon Chelmsford Southend Canvey Island	6
2	Limit on plates issued	7
3	Full knowledge Exceed to Thurstonley and Eastwood	8
	Should live in Rochford	1
	No Company plates	2
	Wheelchair access - 3 rd Application	1
	Taxi Case against Castle Point Council ongoing	5
	Criminal record check - time taken	1
		4

Interesting positive comment from taxi driver "The law of supply and demand will soon find acceptable level of vehicles which can be sustained by Rochford District"

Appendix 1