

Licensing Committee16 June 2008
10.00am-11.40am

Present: Councillors Dixon (Chair), Benstead, Blencowe, Boyce, Hart, Liddle, McGovern, Rosenstiel, Smith, Stuart, Upstone, Wright

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**08/Lic/06 Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

08/Lic/07 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2008 and of the Special Meeting held on 22 May 2008 were confirmed as correct records.

08/Lic/08 Declarations of Interest

Councillor McGovern declared a personal interest in minute number 08/Lic/09 as a lapsed member of the British Motor Cycle Federation.

08/Lic/09 To Consider the Principle of Licensing Solo Motorcycles as Private Hire Vehicles Under Section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Mr Shipp, one of the proprietors of "Ride and Seek" (Harley Davidson Experience) addressed the meeting. He said that motor cycles were less environmentally unfriendly than buses, that the proposed business would give a new slant on tourism for Cambridge, that they would be adequately covered by insurance and that passenger safety was vital.

Several councillors expressed general support for the proposal to license motor cycles as private hire vehicles. They and other members asked questions about aspects of the report.

During the discussion, the following was clarified:

- That a DVLA licence both for cars and motorcycles must have been held for 1 year (not 2 years as stated in the report).
- That the Committee was being asked to agree the principle of licensing motorcycles as private hire vehicles and that the

fares were set by each business and that the Council had no control over this unlike the fares set for hackney carriages.

Members raised the following:

1. That some of the conditions were too prescriptive and others not prescriptive enough.
2. Concerns about the comfort and safety of inexperienced passengers, older passengers and children under the age of 18.
3. Would motorised tricycles be included in the definition of motor cycles?

The Committee agreed the following changes to some of the conditions listed in Appendix B of the officer report:

Riders

Must have held a DVLA licence both for cars and motorcycles for at least 1 year.

Vehicles

Each vehicle has to be fitted with a backrest to ensure customers can sit back and relax during their journey.

Clothing

To ensure passenger safety and comfort the following protective clothing to be compulsory for all customers: -

- Suitable fitted safety helmet to British standard approval.
- Protective jacket, trousers and gloves to CE approval.
- Passengers should wear suitable footwear or boots.

Neck warmer or balaclava to be available to all customers.

Operators

To ensure

- 1) that any passenger under the age of 18 has parental consent for any hiring booked and
- 2) that any customer under the age of 18 is able to sit comfortably on the vehicle and reach the foot rests, and wear a good fitting helmet.

The Committee agreed the recommendations in the officer report as follows:

- 2.1 (By 11 votes to 1) To permit the licensing of solo motor cycles as private hire vehicles.
- 2.2 (Unanimously) To adopt the licensing conditions set out in Appendix B as amended above in respect of such licences to modify the standard licensing conditions.
- 2.3 (Unanimously) that the amended conditions aforementioned together with those currently imposed for normal private hire vehicle licensing, to become the policy for licensing of “solo motor cycles as private hire vehicles” within Cambridge City.

The Committee also agreed that each licensed motor cycle should carry a licence plate on the back of the vehicle.

08/Lic/10 Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2008/09

David Wratten, Chairman of the Cambridge Licensed Taxis Owners' Association (CLTOA) and John Riley of the Cambridge Driver Association (CDA) addressed the meeting.

Mr Wratten said that the principle was to follow the changes made to London Hackney Carriage fares. He said that this year there were also concerns about the rapidly increasing cost of fuel (32%) and that the trade was struggling to meet these increasing costs.

Mr Riley spoke strongly in support of the increased costs facing the trade and for the second recommendation for the Committee about increasing tariffs 1, 2 and 3 by 20p and changing the hours at which tariff 2 could be applied.

The Committee noted two tabled letters, one from Andrew Cundell, Director of Panther Taxis Ltd and one from County Councillor Heathcock, Shadow Liberal Democrat Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care. Both letters raised objections to the recommendations before the Committee.

The Taxi Licensing Officer confirmed that the start date of any increase would be the second Monday in September, 8 September, and that these changes needed to be advertised in the local press. Should any objections from members of the public be received, the matter would need to be reconsidered by the Committee.

The Chair asked when the London decision had been made and whether there had been any increases proposed since then to address the fuel cost increases.

The officer said the decision was made in April 2008 and no increases had been proposed.

Councillor Boyce made new members of the Committee aware of the reason for following the London increases, namely the depth of the research they carried out which was beyond this Council's resources to do.

Councillor Upstone suggested that a more creative approach was needed in future that would help both the public and the trade eg members of the public queuing to share taxis.

The Taxi Licensing Officer said that such a system could be introduced if 10% of the fleet agreed to take part which was 28 drivers.

Councillor Wright asked if any taxis ran on biofuels as she understood this had been tried.

The Taxi Licensing Officer said that the adaptation required meant a loss of luggage space so currently there were no Hackney Carriages running on biofuels although a handful of private hire vehicles did.

Councillors Benstead said that the Committee should be prepared to consider a greater increase than the 4.7% given in London perhaps by using some element of the recommendation about tariffs. This was supported by Councillor Hart.

Councillor Rosenstiel said that 4.7% should be the upper limit of the increase even if elements of the recommendation about tariffs were introduced.

The Committee voted on the recommendations as follows:

2.1 Agreed (by 8 votes to 0) to an increase in the distance and time tariff by 4.7% as requested commencing from September 2008.

2.2a Refused (by 7 votes to 0) the further request to increase tariff 1,2 and 3 by 20p to £2.40p; £3.40p and £4.40p

2.2b Refused (by 11 votes to 0) for a change in times of operation of Tariff 2 from between 1900 hours and 0700 hours on Sunday / Monday and Bank Holidays to between 1900 hours Friday and 0700 hours Monday and on Bank Holidays.

2.3 Agreed that the commencement date would be the 8 September 2008.

Chair