

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 6.47pm

**TAXI LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2008**

Present: Councillor Banwait, Baxter, Hird, Hussain, Leeming, Lowe, Poulter, Rawson, Redfern, Richards, Skelton and Winter

14/08 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Berry and Williams.

15/08 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

16/08 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17/08 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18/08 Renewal of Contracts for Taxi Testing Stations

The Committee received a report from the Director of Environmental Services on Renewal of Contracts for Taxi Testing Stations. The Council approves garages to carry out testing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. The existing contracts for the currently approved testing stations were due to expire on 31 December 2008. It was noted that the intention was to renew the new contracts for a further 2 year period.

There were currently 3 approved testing stations. Although the performance by each of these had been generally satisfactory, representatives of the hackney and private hire trade have raised some concerns, notably about waiting times, operating times of the garages and the cost of the tests conducted.

Members requested that the department investigate concerns raised as to whether the cost of the MOT could be part of the quotation provided as a request had been received from the Trade. Undertaking this process would, amongst others, make it impractical to begin the tendering process before the current contracts expire on 31 December 2008.

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Resolved

- 1. To note the contents of the report.**
- 2. To approve the extension of the current testing station contracts until 31 March 2009.**
- 3. To ask the Assistant Director of Environmental Health and Trading Standards to investigate whether the cost of the MOT can be included within the test fee as part of the quotations provided.**
- 4. Subject to resolution (3) and any changes to be applied as a result of the investigation, to authorise the Assistant Director of Environmental Health and Trading Standards to initiate the tendering and selection process for testing stations on the basis of the revised terms and conditions set out in the report.**

19/08 Driver Training and Qualifications

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Environmental Services on Driver Training and Qualifications. Currently, drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles do not hold any formal qualifications or have attended any structured training courses. This sometimes can be the reason attributed to certain types of complaints received by the Taxi Licensing Team, which, maybe presented to the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee. Typical complaints included disabled customer access issues and attitude of drivers, being rude and unprofessional. At recent trade meetings, the representatives were keen to see some requirement for new and existing drivers to have relevant training to help counteract the mainly negative image drivers have in the wider community.

Members noted that currently the qualifications were provided free of charge and funding was likely to be available until March 2010.

Resolved

- 1. To note the contents of the report.**
- 2. To approve the proposals to consult with the trade about making driver training and qualifications mandatory.**
- 3. If necessary appoint a cross-party working group to consider any comments received from the consultation process.**

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MINUTES END

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