

**LICENSING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 29 MARCH 2007
(FROM 5.30 PM TO 6.15 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Bob Nash in the Chair. Councillors Robin Adderley, Chapman, de Courcey-Bayley, Grange, Pat Jones, Dr Rothwell, Simms and Mrs Smith.

Late Arrivals: Councillor de Courcey-Bayley

Early Departures: None

33/06 - **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Atkinson, Clark, Lightfoot, Webber and Williams. (5.30 pm)

34/06 - **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Councillor Simms declared a personal interest as detailed under Minute 38/06 below. (5.31 pm)

35/06 - **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2007 were approved unanimously as a correct record and signed by the Chair. (5.32 pm)

36/07 - **EXEMPT INFORMATION:** There were no exempt information items.

37/07 - **PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS - QUESTIONS:** There were no questions to consider pursuant to Standing Order 27.

MATTER WHICH IS REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION

38/06 - **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES AND DRIVERS - POLICY UPDATE:** A report in the name of the Head of Public Protection was submitted and the Licensing Manager advised that there were three policy matters for the Committee to consider. He also advised that the matter should be considered as a non-delegated item which required ratification by Council. The Chair advised that he had agreed that Mr K O'Boyle of Central Harrogate Limited could address the meeting with regard to the licensing of multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs) as hackney carriages. Mr O'Boyle supported the view that such vehicles should be wheelchair accessible.

Members then considered each issue. The Licensing Manager referred to paragraph 3.6.4 of the report and to the request by the trade via the Taxi Liaison Group that the current policy to allow a 40% tinted glass in vehicles be amended to allow 30% tint. Practices within the car industry had moved towards the use of that darker tinted glass and the Officer confirmed that passengers in the vehicles could still be clearly seen at a 30% tint. It was agreed that the request be approved.

The Licensing Manager then referred to paragraph 3.7.5 of the report and explained

the need to adopt a policy with regard to the criminal history in relation to hackney carriage and private hire drivers licence applications. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the proposed policy which should be treated as guidelines for both Officers and Licensing Sub-Committee members. It was agreed that these policy guidelines should be adopted. It had the agreement of the Taxi Liaison Group and would ensure public safety whilst maintaining consistency and openness in approach.

The Licensing Manager then referred to paragraph 3.8.6 (a) of the report with regard to MPVs and the issue with regard to requiring them to be wheelchair accessible when licensed as hackney carriages, which was not the current policy. He circulated at the meeting a further letter from Mr R Legate, Chairman of Harrogate Hackney Carriage Association dated 14 March 2007. Currently 15% of all hackney carriages were MPVs and were wheelchair accessible and 5% were MPVs which were not wheelchair accessible. A full discussion ensued on this matter and it was confirmed that an MPV could carry more than four paying passengers. It was agreed that the Policy should be amended to reflect that all new licences issued for MPVs from 1 May 2007 require that such vehicles be wheelchair accessible.

(Councillor Simms declared a personal interest in this item as his sister held a private hire vehicle licence plate. He remained in the meeting room, took part in the discussion and voted)

RECOMMENDED:

That (1) the Policy be changed to specify a 30% tint for all glass behind the front seats with the exception of rear glass which will have no control;

(Unanimous decision)

(2) the draft Policy detailed at appendix 2 to the report be approved; and

(Unanimous decision)

(3) with effect from 1 May 2007, all MPV vehicles being licensed for the first time as hackney carriages be required to be wheelchair accessible.

(Eight Members voted for the motion and there was one abstention)

(5.32 pm to 6.10 pm)