

Monday 17 October 2005  
at 6.00pm



# General Licensing Committee

**MEMBERS:** Councillor Mrs MURRAY (Chairman) Councillor BOWKER (Deputy Chairman), Councillors BELSEY, HERBERT, LACEY OBE, Mrs POOLEY, Mrs SIMS, SKILTON, SLATER, STEVENS, TAYLOR, WARNER and Miss WOODALL.

(Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Harris and Marsh).

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## 4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2005 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

Councillor Lacey OBE commented that in respect of the Consultation on Delimitation of Taxi Numbers, Members of the Committee had yet to be advised of the Council's response to the Department of Transport in respect of the review of the Council's policy, as requested at the meeting. The Licensing Manager reported that a response on this issue would be sent to the Committee as soon as possible.

## 5 Declaration of Interests.

Councillor Slater declared a personal interest in items 6 and 7, as a distant member of his family was a taxi driver.

## 6 Taxi Matters.

The Committee considered the report of the Licensing Manager regarding the enforcement of legislation relating to hackney carriage and private hire matters. The Committee was advised that key Members of the Licensing Team may not have been properly authorised to conduct role specific duties and that this adversely affected their ability to enforce legislation and instigate prosecutions. It was proposed to increase the number and frequency of enforcement visits and it was essential that procedures were established and adhered to. This was required to maintain public safety and for appropriate action to be taken against members of the trade who failed to comply with Council licence conditions and related Government legislation.

Authority was sought for the appropriate powers to be delegated to three officers within the Licensing Team. The Licensing Manager advised that the

Licensing Act 2003 would be added to the list of authorisations detailed at appendix A of the report.

The Committee welcomed the proposal to increase visits and effectively enforce licence conditions and taxi legislation.

With reference to the requirement for any action taken to be reasonable and proportionate, the Licensing Manager reported that the instigation of legal proceedings was used as a last resort, following a series of warnings and that it was essential to strike the right balance between engagement and enforcement. The visits would be used to engage more with the trade and target individuals who were in breach of licence conditions or legislation.

**RESOLVED: (By 12 votes to 1)** That the Officers detailed in the report be granted delegated authority to enforce the provisions of and to take any action necessary in connection with the relevant Acts, Directives and associated legislation as set out in appendix A of the report.

## **7 Taxi Trade – Forthcoming Topics.**

The Committee received a presentation from the Licensing Manager on key issues and challenges for the future in respect of taxi licensing. The Licensing Team was keen to work with the trade to improve public safety and raise standards. The trade had established a new taxi forum and officers from the council had been invited to attend the first meeting of the Eastbourne Hackney Carriage Association.

The Committee would be consulted on the contents of a handbook proposed to guide the trade on all aspects of being a licensed driver, the Council's procedures and legislative requirements. Current issues under investigation relating to vehicles that did not display the required door signs and the illegal plying for hire and touting.

Drivers who had above a certain number of points on their licence would be required to undertake a driving course to improve driving skills and look at their general attitude to driving and other road users.

With reference to delimitation, it was reported that two companies had expressed an interest in undertaking the required survey work.

The Committee welcomed the initiatives proposed and thanked the Licensing Manager and her team for the work being undertaken to consult and work with the trade and seek improvements to the service in a number of areas.

**RESOLVED** That the work being undertaken in respect of taxi licensing be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

**Mrs A Murray  
Chairman**