

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Regulatory Committee on Monday, 18 September 2006 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Philbin (Chairman), Pearsall (Vice-Chairman), Cole, Cross, D Inch, Lowe, E Ratcliffe and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Drakeley, Gilligan and Nelson

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: G. Ferguson, L Capper, K. Cleary and J. Tully

Also in attendance: (none)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

REG4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd May, 5th June and 27th June 2006 having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

REG5 GAMBLING ACT 2005

The Committee considered a report presenting a draft statement of Gambling Policy, which the Council was required to adopt under the Gambling Act 2005.

The Government had recently announced that statements of gambling policy must be enforced by the end of January 2007. A Statement of Gambling Policy must be adopted by the Council at least one month before that date. A meeting of full Council was scheduled for 13th December 2006 and it was anticipated that this would be a suitable date for adopting the statement.

It was reported that the Council could only adopt the Statement after formal consultation in accordance with the 2005 Act. The draft Statement of Gambling Policy had been

Action

endorsed by the Executive Board at its meeting on 7th September 2006. Following the Executive Board meeting it was anticipated that the formal consultation period would begin on or about 8th September 2006, ending by week commencing 23rd October 2006.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REG6 LICENSING

The Committee received an update report on the type and number of licenses issued by Legal Services. In respect of each type of licence the report detailed the following information:

- (i) legislation involved;
- (ii) right of appeal;
- (iii) persons involved other than Legal Services;
- (iv) the number of new licences to be created by 2008;
- (v) potential legislation;
- (vi) public involvement; and
- (vii) charges.

Arising from the discussion the Committee considered its future training needs. It was agreed that a Training Session would be held on gaming machines and a training session would be held for all Members of the Council on the Gambling Act 2005.

It was also agreed that future meetings of the Committee, with the exception of 3rd October, special meeting, would begin at 6.30 pm with a training session to be held prior to the meeting at 6.00 pm.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Licensing tables as detailed in the report be supplemented with additional information as outlined at the meeting and published on the Council's website; and
- (2) a training session be arranged for all Members of the Council on the Gambling Act 2005 as more details are published.

Council Solicitor

REG7 TAXI LICENSING MATTER

The Committee considered a request by Mr. A. Scott

on behalf of Members of the Halton T & G for the age restriction on all seven seater Hackney Carriage vehicles to be lifted.

Mr. Scott, Mr. McIntyre and Mr. Baldwin attended the meeting and addressed Members of the Committee on the proposal. Mr. Scott had listed the following reasons for the request:

- (i) all seven seater vehicles were M1 registered;
- (ii) all the vehicles were wheelchair friendly, this would meet with the new Government Legislation that was being rolled out from 2010;
- (iii) drivers were paying from £19,000 - £30,000 for each vehicle, this meant that they were laying out a lot of capital only to be told that the investment was only good for eight years;
- (iv) the Council test each vehicle, over three years old at least twice a year and could recall any vehicle in for a spot check which meant any vehicle failing the Council did have the power to withdraw the licence;
- (v) a vehicle over eight years old that was totally roadworthy and had constantly passed the Council test, failed only because of its age is ludicrous;
- (vi) unlike cars that had the same age criteria these vehicles were purpose built for the trade; and
- (vii) cars also had a limited life expectancy as far as government legislation was concerned in that each authority would eventually have to have to enforce the wheelchair friendly criteria.

The Council's response to each of the above comments was detailed in the report.

At present the Council's criteria on age limits for qualifying vehicles were:

- purpose built Hackney Carriages (approved by the Public Carriage Office)
no age limit but generally had been manufactured since 1988;
- saloon, estate, multi-purpose and multi-seat vehicles under eight years old.

An age limit on non-purpose built vehicles was requested by the Taxi Trade to ensure the image and quality of the vehicles was maintained.

Members of the Committee adjourned the meeting to view examples of the vehicles in question.

RESOLVED: That a review of the current policy on age limits of licensed vehicles be carried out in a manner to be determined by the Council Solicitor and that the manner be referred back to the Regulatory Committee in due course for further consideration.

Council Solicitor

N.B Councillor Wainwright declared a personal interest in the above item as a member of the T & G Union.

REG8 TAXI LICENSING MATTER

Mr. R. Woodward had requested an age increase for a vehicle he intended to purchase and use as a Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

In the light of the previous decision, Mr. Woodward agreed to withdraw the request pending the review of the current policy on age limits of licensed vehicles.

Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.