

**Minutes of the Licensing Committee
of the Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on Thursday 17 January 2013 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor A Hope (Chairman)	(P)	Councillor J Anderdon Vice-Chairman)	(P)
Councillor I Andersen	(P)	Councillor A Johnston	(P)
Councillor A Beesley	(P)	Councillor P Lashbrook	(-)
Councillor A Brook	(P)	Councillor N Long	(P)
Councillor J Budzynski	(P)	Councillor I Richards	(P)
Councillor M Cooper	(P)	Councillor A Tupper	(A)
Councillor B Few Brown	(P)	Councillor J Whiteley	(P)
Councillor A Finlay	(A)		

Also in attendance:

Mr Robin Pike, Chairman, Test Valley Taxi
Association

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committees held on 5 October 2012 be received.

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Public Participation

Mr Pike, the Chairman of the Test Valley Taxi Association, addressed the Committee in order to express the concerns of the taxi trade concerning de-restriction of hackney carriage licensing. He also circulated some supporting information for Members consideration.

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Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy

The Committee considered a report on the hackney carriage licensing policy.

The Licensing Manager reported that the Borough Council continued to be in a minority of authorities that restricts the number of hackney carriage licences it issued.

The policy was last reviewed in April 2012 when the Committee received representations from the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Busk. It was agreed that preference would be given to potential operators of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Romsey area as there was a greater identified need for such vehicles in that part of the Borough.

In order to address the concerns over availability of taxis particularly wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Romsey area notices were placed inviting expressions of interest from potential applicants for one of four currently available licences. Expressions of interest were invited but only six responses were received and only one of those from the Romsey area. The poor response rate was of concern to officers and the Committee now had to consider if it should proceed with interviews for potential applicants.

The Licensing Manager summarised the three options regarding future hackney carriage licensing policy as outlined in the report. He suggested that the best option would be to refrain from issuing further licences and to review the current policy of restricting numbers. A further report would be brought back to the Committee shortly.

Some Members expressed concern at the prospect of de-restriction, favouring a controlled approach to any future growth in the number of licences issued. A lack of availability of taxis in Romsey and the rural parts of the Borough was also mentioned.

The Licensing Manager assured the Committee that he would undertake a comprehensive public consultation exercise, including the taxi trade and local user groups. He would start the consultation as soon as possible.

Resolved:

That the Committee determine the Council's future licensing policy with regard to the issue of Hackney Carriage licences by adopting the approach that no further licences will be issued until consultation on de-restriction would be undertaken as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report and a decision on de-restriction has been taken.

282 Suspension of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Administration which informed the Committee that the Head of Administration had suspended for a period of two weeks a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence under delegated powers.

A Private Hire Vehicle driver had failed to disclose a criminal conviction and it is the Council's policy to revoke or suspend a licence if a driver is convicted of any relevant offence. The applicant had been advised of the right to appeal to the Magistrates Court against the Council's decision provided it was within 21 days of receiving notification from the Council. No appeal notice was lodged.

In answer to a comment from a Member, the Licensing Manager confirmed that the offence had no bearing on the driver's ability to continue working. The sanction had been imposed for the failure to comply with a Licence conditions which required a driver to notify the Licensing Manager of any convictions.

The matter was reported to the Committee for information only to ensure that the Council's scheme of delegation was complied with. The Licensing Manager stressed that it was important for Members to be made aware of such decisions and the reasons why they were taken.

Resolved:

That it be noted that the Head of Administration has suspended a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence.

(Meeting terminated at 6.15 pm)