

Item 5(b) – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

The Licensing Committee's Recommendation to Council

At its meeting on 26 October 2011 the Licensing Committee considered the matter as follows:

“The Assistant Licensing Partnership Manager presented the report which gave detailed feedback from the consultation period for the Draft Statement of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy which ran for six weeks from the 26 August 2011 until the 7 October 2011. The proposed policy amended the current policy that Sevenoaks District Council had in operation which was last issued in January 2008. Members noted that there is no statutory requirement for a Licensing Authority to produce a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy but that the Department for Transport “Best Practice” recommends that one is in place.

The Chairman advised that he had met with Mr. Rizvi the lead petitioner of a petition received against the proposed penalty points system, who was also present at the meeting. He asked whether he had had an opportunity to relay the conversation to his colleagues. Mr. Rizvi reported that he had but that it was still felt that the penalty points system was unnecessary.

Members considered the feedback attached at Appendix B in great detail.

Members considered the suggestion that the minimum number of passengers be reduced to 1 (i.e. the Smart car etc). It was agreed that Officers should explore this further, but that it should be left as it was for the time being.

Action 1: Officers investigate and report back to a future meeting.

Members discussed applicants for licences involving vehicles that had been converted to run on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) and agreed suitable wording that where a spare wheel is not possible it should read ‘Where relocation of the spare wheel is not possible an acceptable alternative, as supplied by the conversion company, will be permitted.’

When considering concerns expressed with regard to the new internal plates and wearing of badges the Assistant Licensing Partnership Manager advised that these had been redesigned, and plastic receptacles would be provided for the internal plate.

Members agreed that it may not be practicable for drivers to search their vehicle after every journey but felt that a daily search should be a minimum requirement and/or should make reference to a search after each shift.

It was agreed that there should be an insertion of a requirement under ‘Breach of Policy Requirement’ “Failure to display the internal driver’s badge” 4 – 6 (points) and “Failure to display the internal vehicle plate” 4 – 6 (points).

Members' acknowledged the concerns expressed by taxi drivers with regard to the proposal of the penalty points.

Resolved: That:

- (i) All the representations and comments received following the consultation be noted,
- (ii) the Officer comments and recommendations set out at Appendix B, be approved and included in the final policy, subject to the comments/amendments made at the meeting; and,
- (iii) **the final policy be REFERRED to Full Council for adoption**".

Note: Text in bold type represents a recommendation to the Council.