
Meeting: Regulation Committee
Date: 17 November 2010
Subject: Duration of combined Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licences
Report of: Gary Alderson - Director of Sustainable Communities
Summary: This report seeks instructions on whether or not Members wish to carry out a consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade in order to ascertain their views with regard to the issue of three year combined hackney carriage and private hire driver licences.

Contact Officer: Margaret James, Licensing and Enforcement Officer.
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Supporting and Caring for an ageing population – provision of safe public transport supports independent living.

Financial:

Fees are payable for hackney carriage and private hire licences. The fees being charged represent the cost of the Council producing the licence.

Legal:

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

Risk Management:

Ensuring that hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers operating in Central Bedfordshire are safe and properly regulated.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The Council has a legal duty to proactively promote race, gender and disability equality and to tackle discrimination experienced by other vulnerable groups. In order to ensure the personal safety of all vulnerable groups wishing to use licensed vehicles, conditions attached to licences ensure that this duty is met.

Community Safety:

Contributes to a safer public transport system and a safer night time economy. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act to do all that it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder in its area. The provision of safe, well regulated transport contributes to this duty and in order to ensure that drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are 'fit and proper' to hold a licence rigorous checks must be undertaken.

Sustainability:

By regulating this service area we can ensure that those businesses that are compliant can be supported and resources can be focused at those business that will not comply.

RECOMMENDATION

That a 12 week consultation be carried out with the hackney carriage and private hire trade to seek their views on the issue of three year driver licences.

Background

1. The Council is the Licensing Authority for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators and is responsible for providing a licensed service to the community that is safe and accessible.
2. The hackney carriage and private hire trade have a right to expect a fair and reasonable licensing regime.
3. Before a local authority can make a decision on policies and conditions affecting the hackney carriage and private hire trade, they must consider the views of all interested parties.
4. January 2010, Members of the Regulation Committee resolved that it would be necessary for hackney carriage / private hire drivers to renew their licences annually rather than every three years.

5. On 12 October 2010, those drivers attending the monthly taxi and private hire forum expressed their disappointment that this authority does not allow the issue of three year driver licences and asked that Members reconsider the duration of driver licenses. Two Members of the Regulation Committee were present at the forum. They agreed that consideration to carrying out a consultation on the matter would be sought at the November meeting of the Regulation Committee

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None

Location of papers:

The Council Offices, Dunstable