

Central Bedfordshire Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 07 February 2018

Review of Leighton Buzzard Taxi Rank.

Advising Officers: Director of Community Services, Marcel Coiffait
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Public Protection Officer (Licensing)
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Purpose of this report

1. To consider Leighton-Linslade Town Council's request to vary the Market Square taxi stand on market days.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To seek a decision from Members in relation to the request.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. Licensing matters do not fall within the O & S remit.

Current Taxi Stand at Market Square, Leighton Buzzard.

2. The current taxi stand at Market Square, Leighton Buzzard, comprises space for four taxis facing east. The stand is operational 24 hours a day.

Proposed Taxi Stand at Market Square, Leighton Buzzard.

3. Leighton-Linslade Town Council would like to vary the taxi stand on market days (Tuesday and Saturdays) only. The proposal, therefore, is to revoke the current stand, facing east, on these days and to appoint a new stand on the opposite side of the road facing west.

Background

4. As part of their Market Town Regeneration programme, Leighton-Linslade Town Council have been exploring options for a relocation of the Market Square taxi rank. A copy of Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee report dated 7 September can be found at Appendix A.

The report refers to two options. Members are only asked to make a decision on Option A outlined in the Town Council's report.

5. In October 2017 members of the hackney carriage trade were invited to a meeting with Leighton-Linslade Town Council to discuss their proposals. A copy of their letter to the trade, notes from their meeting and their follow up letter can be found at Appendix B for your information.

The Consultation Process

6. This authority is responsible for the provision of hackney carriage stands in Central Bedfordshire. Stands can be permanent, where they would be protected solely for the use of hackney carriages or part time, where they are provided for hackney carriages to use at certain times. Stands cannot be varied until the proper consultation has been carried out and any objections considered.
7. On 14 November the proposal was advertised in the local press. Letters setting out the proposals were also sent to the Chief Officer of Police, local Councillors, local stakeholders including hackney carriage drivers, local businesses and the Town Council. The consultation ran for 28 days. A copy of the public notice can be found at Appendix C.
8. Comments from Cllrs Ray Berry and Roy Johnstone can be found at Appendix D.
9. A list of named drivers opposed to the variation can be found at Appendix E. At the time of writing this report no reasons for their objections has been received although they have been requested. However, Appendix B does include notes on some issues raised by the trade. No further objections have been received.

Council Priorities

The proposed action supports at least one of the Council's priorities, listed below.

- Enhancing the local community – creating jobs, managing growth, and enabling business to grow.
- Protecting the vulnerable – ensuring a safe and accessible licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade.

Legal Implications

10. Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Local Authority is responsible for providing a licensed service to the community that is safe and accessible.

11. The hackney carriage and private hire trade have a right to expect a fair and reasonable licensing regime.

Financial and Risk Implications

12. Fees are payable for hackney carriage and private hire licences. The fees charged represent the cost of the council producing the licences.

Equalities Implications

13. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
 - In order to ensure the personal safety of all vulnerable groups wishing to use licensed vehicle, conditions attached to licences ensure that this duty is met.

Conclusion and next Steps

14. The Licensing Committee must make a decision on this matter. If a decision is taken to permit the proposal, steps will be taken to change the traffic signage.

Appendices

The following Appendix is attached

15. Appendix A - Copy of Leighton-Linslade Town Council Partnership committee Report dated 7 September 2017.
16. Appendix B – Copy of Leighton-Linslade Town Council letter to the hackney carriage trade, notes from their meeting together with their follow up letter.
17. Appendix C – Copy of the Public Notice as advertised in the local press.
18. Appendix D – Email comments from Cllrs Ray Berry and Roy Johnstone.
19. Appendix E – List of named drivers opposed to the variation.

Background Papers

None