

LICENSING (TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE) SUB-COMMITTEE

held 18th August, 1999
at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Fishwick (in the Chair)
Councillors Beavan (for Smith), Driver, Stuart and Wilkinson

APOLOGIES: Councillor Smith

SECTION 'B' - FUNCTIONS DELEGATED

Minutes

1. Resolved that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Sub-Committee held 16th June, 1999 be approved as a correct record.

Hackney Carriage Stands

2. The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the meeting of the Sub-Committee, held 14th April, 1999, he had been instructed to investigate the possibility of establishing Hackney Carriage Stands at the following locations.

- a) John Street Car Park, Haslingden
- b) Blackburn Road/Ratcliffe Fold, Haslingden
- c) Bus Stop/Turning Circle, off Burnley Road East, Waterfoot
- d) Waterfoot Car Park
- e) Unnamed road, off Cowpe Road, Waterfoot, adjacent to the coal yard, running parallel to Bacup Road.

Immediately prior to the meeting, Councillors had met on site to view the above mentioned proposals.

John Street Car Park, Haslingden

2(a) The Chief Executive Officer reported that the proposal was to establish a Hackney Carriage Stand in the car park at John Street, Haslingden, adjacent to the Co-Op Store. This proposed Hackney Carriage stand would be operational during off peak hours from 9.00 pm to 3.00 am, seven days per week, for eight vehicles.

The Police and Lancashire County Council had no objections to the proposal, but the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer expressed some concern at how a Hackney Carriage Stand could be marked out in a car park, in accordance with the markings prescribed by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions.

Resolved that no further action be taken with regard to the establishment of a Hackney Carriage Stand at John Street Car Park, Haslingden.

Blackburn Road/Ratcliffe Fold, Haslingden

2(b) The Chief Executive Officer reported that the proposal was to establish a Hackney Carriage Stand for 8 vehicles on Ratcliffe Fold with vehicles exiting on to the roundabout junction with Blackburn Road and John Street, from 9.00 pm to 3.00 am, seven days per week.

The Police had no objections to this proposal, but the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer and the Lancashire County Council were objecting on the grounds that Ratcliffe Fold could easily become congested with parked vehicles, adding that there were no turning facilities, and that they did not view it desirable for traffic flows to be increased at this location.

Resolved that no further action be taken with regard to the establishment of a Hackney Carriage Stand at Blackburn Road/Ratcliffe Fold, Haslingden.

Bus Stop/Turning Circle - Off Burnley Road East, Waterfoot

2(c) The Chief Executive Officer reported that the proposal would be to establish a Hackney Carriage Stand for 10 vehicles, from the departure of the last bus until 3.00 am, seven days per week, at the bus stop/turning circle off Burnley Road East, Waterfoot.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that both the Police and the County Council had no objections to the proposals, provided that there was no clash with bus operations. Rossendale Transport had been consulted about this proposal, and they had no objections, so long as the Hackney Carriage Stand did not become operational until after the departure of the last bus.

The Borough Engineer and Planning Officer had expressed some reservations about the proposal insofar as the area was not a public highway and there may be issues relating to third party liability. The Borough Engineer and Planning Officer also referred to potential problems with regard to directional signs to the Hackney Carriage Stand.

The Chief Executive Officer reminded Members that adjacent to the turning circle was a sheltered housing scheme, accommodating, in the main, elderly residents. This scheme was separated from the turning circle by a brick wall. There was the possibility of disturbance and nuisance to residents to consider.

Resolved that in accordance with the Sub-Committee's consultation policy, the Chief Executive Officer consult residents in the vicinity of the proposed rank, and the Borough Housing and Environmental Health Officer on the proposal, and the responses to the consultation be reported to the next meeting.

Waterfoot Car Park

2(d) The Chief Executive Officer reported that he had consulted with the Police, Lancashire County Council and the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer about the introduction of two way operations at the entrance to Waterfoot Car Park, off Bacup Road. At present, vehicles exited the car park via the rear of Waterfoot Neighbourhood office and Millar Barn Lane. The Police, Lancashire County Council and the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer were all opposed to the introduction of two way operations at Waterfoot Car Park on the grounds of road safety.

Resolved that no further action be taken with regard to the establishment of a Hackney Carriage Stand at Waterfoot Car Park.

Unnamed Road, off Cowpe Road, Waterfoot

2(e) The Chief Executive Officer reported that the proposal was to establish a Hackney Carriage stand for 10 vehicles from 9.00 pm to 3.00 am on the unnamed street off Cowpe Road, Waterfoot, adjacent to the coal yard and running parallel to Bacup Road.

The Police and Lancashire County Council had no objections to the proposals. The Borough Engineer and Planning Officer though, expressed some reservations about this stand, stating that the street was unadopted, in a poor condition without footways, that the road junction with Cowpe Road was poor and the street was not well lit.

Resolved that no further action be taken with regard to the establishment of a Hackney Carriage Stand at the unnamed street, off Cowpe Road, Waterfoot.

People Carriers

3. The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, held 16th June, 1999, Members had given consideration to a report relating to the seating layout of certain vehicles which the Council had licensed to carry in excess of 4 passengers. It had been suggested that Members may wish to consider adopting guidelines whereby those vehicles which were considered unsuitable, would not be licensed and that to cover instances where there was some doubt, applicants be invited to submit details of the vehicle and seating layout in advance, before the vehicle is purchased, and that the Chief Executive Officer be delegated authority to determine applications in those cases of doubt. The Sub-Committee resolved to defer consideration of the report.

The Chief Executive Officer suggested that there should be access to two doors for every passenger; such doors to be capable of being opened from the inside or the outside of the vehicle and that passengers have unrestricted access to both doors without the need to climb over seats or luggage within the vehicle.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that he had been approached by the proprietor of a Peugeot 806 vehicle, presently licensed as a Private Hire Vehicle. The vehicle was inspected and was fitted with forward facing seat belts; the middle bank of seats had access via a door on either the nearside or the offside of the vehicle and the rear seats similarly had access via the same nearside or offside door, after the middle seats had been tilted forwards. There was also access/egress from the rear of the vehicle, but the door could only be opened from the outside.

The Chief Executive Officer added that if the Sub-Committee wished to proceed in tightening the licensing regime in respect of vehicles with more than four passenger seats, he recommended that there continue to be a need to arrive at a specification clearly understandable, but there would also need to be an element of discretion to be exercised, in respect of those vehicles which may not precisely fit the specification.

Resolved i) that with effect from 1st September 1999, in respect of vehicles licensed to carry in excess of four passengers, it be a condition of the vehicle licence that all rows of seats have direct access to a minimum of one door; all doors to be capable of being opened from inside and outside the vehicle

ii) that in respect of those vehicles currently licensed by the Council which would not satisfy the criteria outlined in resolution (i) above, authority be given to issue licences for a period of three years from the date the vehicle was first licensed

iii) that the Chief Executive Officer write to advise all existing licence holders of these changes and that he similarly advise the testing garages

iv) that the Chief Executive Officer seek information on the practices of a sample of licensing authorities in the matter

Age Limit

4. Further to the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, held 16th June, 1999, the Chief Executive Officer reported that all licensed vehicles - private hire and hackney carriage - were subject to two tests per year, and that no age limit on vehicles was presently in force.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that of the 160 vehicles presently licensed, 122 were in excess of five years old.

A Member referred to the site visits made to proposed Hackney Carriage Stands, prior to the meeting, when Members were approached by representatives of trade. It was suggested that representatives of the Trade be invited to attend a meeting with Members of the Sub-Committee, to discuss matters relating to the Borough's Taxi and Private Hire Operations.

Resolved i) that the Borough's Licensed Taxi and Private Hire Trade (Private Hire Operators and Representatives of Rossendale Taxi Association) be invited to attend a meeting with Members of the Sub-Committee, to discuss matters pertaining to the Borough's Taxi and Private Hire Operations, and that prior to the meeting they be requested to put forward their own items for the agenda and

ii) that the question of an age limit for vehicles be placed on the agenda for the meeting referred to in (i) above.

Driver Improvement Scheme

5. The Chief Executive Officer reported that he had been approached by Lancashire Constabulary who advised that one of the key objectives of the local policing plans, was the reduction of road collisions.

The Constabulary in partnership with the Road Safety Department of Lancashire County Council provided a Driver Improvement Course - an intensive 1½ day period of instruction with lectures and practical defensive driving lessons at a cost of £120.00 per person.

Details of the scheme were copied to the Members. The Police were suggesting that the scheme be used as part of the application process for applicants for private hire and hackney carriage drivers licenses. The Police view was that if more local drivers were to participate in the scheme, there would in the longer term be fewer road collisions in East Lancashire. They suggested that in cases where an applicant has driving convictions, it may be made a condition of the application that they attend the course to improve their driving. Alternatively, it may be that all new applicants be required to attend the course. Payment of the costs, would be paid by the applicant.

Resolved that the matter be raised at the meeting with the trade referred to in minute no. 4 above.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.30 P.M.