

REGULATORY PANEL

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2015 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Bell (Chairman), Bowman S, Layden, Morton, Mrs Parsons, Shepherd, Cape, Ms Franklin, Mrs Stevenson and Wilson.

OFFICERS: Assistant Solicitor
Licensing Manager

RP.32/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

RP.33/15 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

RP.34/15 MINUTE'S SILENCE

It was with deep sadness that the Chairman reported the death on 11 October 2015 of Councillor Terry Scarborough who had served on the City Council from 2003 representing Botcherby Ward.

The Chairman indicated that Councillor Scarborough's passing was indeed a sad loss to the City and Members stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of Councillor Scarborough.

RP.35/15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 September 2015 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

RP.36/15 DEREGULATION ACT 2015 – CHANGES TO DRIVER AND OPERATOR LICENSING

The Licensing Manager submitted report GD.66/15 which set out the changes to the duration of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences and Operator licences following the implementation of the De-regulation Act 2015.

The Licensing Manager reported that the De-regulation Act amended the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and introduced, for Private and Hackney carriage driver licences, a 3 year licence, and, for Private Hire Operators, a 5 year licence. There was an option for the Council to grant a licence for a lesser period where the District Council thought it was appropriate in the circumstances of the case.

Carlisle City Council issued annual licences which ensured the appropriate checks were undertaken each year and three yearly checks were undertaken with external agencies such as criminal record and driving licence status checks.

To date guidance had not been issued from the Department of Transport in relation to the changes and guidance was being sought from the Institute of Licensing and the Local Government Association on all aspects of the implementation.

The Licensing Manager stated that discussions with the Trade had indicated that they would prefer to maintain annual licences. A detailed time and activity exercise was being undertaken to quantify the nature of the tasks performed by the Licensing Section which would allow the calculation of the appropriate fee for three yearly driver licences and five yearly operator licences.

In addition the Council needed to consider the circumstances under which a licence may be issued for a 'lesser period' and what the lesser period may be.

A Member asked if it would be possible to change both the driver licences and operators licences to three years and the Licensing Manager explained that it was possible to consider three years for both, however, the operators licences did not cause a lot of administration or issues with compliance.

The Panel raised concerns that the change to three years may have an adverse effect on the high standard of taxi drivers within the District.

RESOLVED –1) That report GD.66/15 be welcomed;

2) That the existing arrangements with regard to the issuing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences and Private Hire operators licences continue until such time as guidance from the Department of Transport is published, guidance from the Institute of Licensing and the Local Government Association is obtained, consultation has been completed and costings are available to calculate fees;

3) That an updated report be presented to the Regulatory Panel at its meeting on 27 April 2016.

(The meeting ended at 2.15pm)