

REGULATORY PANEL

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 4.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ellis- Williams (Chair), Mrs Mallinson (as substitute for Councillor Bainbridge), Mallinson J (as substitute for Councillor Collier), Meller, Morton, Nedved, Patrick, Miss Sherriff, Dr Tickner, Tinnion and Miss Whalen.

OFFICERS: Assistant Solicitor
Regulatory Services Manager
Licensing Manager

RP.13/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf on Councillor Bainbridge and Councillor Collier.

RP.14/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

RP.15/20 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and the items of business in Part B be dealt with when the public and press were excluded.

RP.16/20 COVID 19 – ISSUES RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

The Licensing Manager submitted report GD.46/20 which gave the Panel a second update on how the service had adapted and how issues were being addressed in order to continue to provide a service to existing hackney carriage and private hire licence holders.

The Licensing Manager reported that applications for new vehicle licences were not being accepted and the necessary checks tests to fulfil the criteria for licencing could be carried out. However, it was not yet possible to accept new applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers.

The Licensing Manager set out the changes to the administration of licences and GP medicals along with an update on the suspensions of MOT/COC tests. She reminded the Panel of the guidance for protective screens and informed them that 16 applications for screens had been made to the authority.

Although Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles were not included in the mandatory requirement to wear a face covering whilst using public transport. The Government did recommend that one should be worn in an enclosed environment. A taxi driver or private hire operator may be entitled to refuse to accept a passenger is they were not wearing a face covering. In conjunction with the Public Health Team at Cumbria County Council the Licensing Team had continually reinforced the recommendation for drivers and passengers to wear a face covering in a licensed vehicle.

In response to Members' questions the Licensing Manager confirmed / clarified the following:

- There was no requirement for Hackney Carriage drivers to keep records of their fares if passengers did not want to submit information for Test and Trace. The Council encouraged driver to keep records but, as it was not part of the conditions, it could not be enforced;
- City Council supported the installation of protective screens in licensed vehicles provided they were fit for purpose and were of a safe standard. A guidance note had been produced which encouraged the installation, but it was not mandatory;
- The disability awareness training was delivered in house by the Licensing team; however the training was not Carlisle specific so there could be an opportunity to work with other authorities to deliver the virtual training;
- It was acceptable to ask a driver to remove their face covering and show their badge so passengers could be assured they were licensed drivers before getting into the vehicle;
- Guidance was circulated to drivers via email where possible or through the post.
- National standards had been released for taxi drivers and private hire drivers, a workshop information session would be arranged to discuss the guidance and how it would be incorporated into Council processes.

RESOLVED – That Covid -19 issues relating to Hackney Carriage and private Hire Licensing (GD.46/20) be noted.

[The meeting ended at 4.22pm]