

**HACKNEY CARRIAGE SUB COMMITTEE
19 FEBRUARY 1998**

Present: Councillor Egan (Chairman), Councillors Beadsley, Blatchford, North,
Mrs Pile and Veakins

Also Present: Councillor Simonds

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 12 November 1997 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Review of Charges (Minute 14)

It was reported that no objections had been received in relation to the revised charges in respect of vehicle and operator licence fees and thus these charges would apply from 31 March 1998.

26. Meeting with Hackney Carriage Trade (Item 1)

The Sub Committee considered the notes of the meeting with representatives of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Drivers Association held on 5 February 1998. Representatives had raised two particular matters for the consideration of the Sub Committee. In relation to the first of these, the designation of vehicles as no smoking vehicles, the Sub Committee noted that clear guidance on the designation of vehicles as no smoking vehicles would be produced. The other issue raised by the representatives was that of accessible vehicles, which was the subject of a separate report to the Sub Committee (see Minute 27 below).

The Sub Committee also discussed the issue of the use of bus lanes by hackney carriages and noted that the all the current highways policies of Berkshire County Council, including the policy on the use of bus lanes, would be adopted by this Council with effect from 1 April. However, as highway authority from this date, the Council would in a position to review these policies and the use of bus lanes by taxis could be considered in due course.

RESOLVED that the notes of the meeting held with representatives of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Drivers Association held on 5 February 1998 be received.

27. Accessible Vehicles (Item 2)

The Sub Committee considered progress in relation to the introduction of wheelchair accessible vehicles. The Sub Committee reviewed the requirement, agreed in February 1997, that 10% of vehicles fleets should be wheelchair accessible by 31 March 1998. The Sub Committee was advised that only three vehicles were currently wheelchair accessible in the Borough and noted a letter submitted by an operator, which highlighted the difficulties of acquiring wheelchair accessible taxis that met existing Government guidelines. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the Government was still considering the revised

guidance for wheelchair accessible vehicles, arising from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Sub Committee concluded that it was appropriate to defer the implementation of the 10% requirement until 31 March 1999; however, it reaffirmed its aim of ensuring that hackney carriages in the Borough would comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Various aspects of the issue were discussed and arising from the discussion it was agreed that a reduction in the licence fee levied would be implemented for wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles, which would be in line with the fee for hackney carriage licences, where 50% of the fee was waived. The possibility of providing 'orange disks' for such vehicles was also considered, but in view of the wider issues was not pursued.

The Sub Committee concluded that it would be appropriate to seek the views of the Access Committee on the general matter of accessibility to hackney carriages and private hire vehicles prior to taking this matter further.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the requirement for 10% of all hackney carriage vehicle fleets to be wheelchair accessible be deferred until 31 March 1999;
- (ii) the 50% waiver in licensing fee for wheelchair accessible hackney carriages be extended to private hire vehicles;
- (iii) the Sub Committee's aim of meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in relation to hackney carriages be reaffirmed; and
- (iv) the Access Committee be requested to provide advice in relation to the general accessibility to hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

28. Issue of Hackney Carriage Licences (Items 3 & 4)

The Sub Committee considered proposals in relation to the issue of hackney carriage vehicle licences for the coming year, together with two applications for new vehicle licences. Whilst subject to appropriate checks officers would not raise any objection to renewals to current licence holders, except one requiring further investigation. However, objections to renew a number of licences may be raised, solely on the basis of the vehicle in use.

The Sub Committee also considered a written submission (tabled) from a licence holder seeking an exemption to the criterion relating to the age of vehicles.

RESOLVED that

- (i) 120 hackney carriage vehicle licences be issued as renewals for 1998/99, subject to one particular licence identified, this renewal or refusal to renew being determined by the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman;
- (ii) two new licences be issued, one each to Mr S Readings of Bracknell and Mr A E Clacey of Bracknell;
- (iii) should new vehicles not be forthcoming to replace those identified in the report, then the licences be revoked, with the exception of an extension of six months being

granted to the operator who made the written submission; this extension being subject to the vehicle in question being given tests of mechanical fitness every three months.

29. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following Item which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(12) Information in connection with possible legal proceedings

30. **Operator's Licence 8/97 (Item 5)**

The Sub Committee considered an oral report in relation to Operator Licence 8/97.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and
concluded at 7.20 pm

CHAIRMAN