

SPEAKERS PANEL (LICENSING)

Tuesday, 24 November 2015

Commenced: 9.30 am

Terminated: 12.30 pm

Present: Councillors Bray (Chair), Beeley, Downs, F Travis and Wild

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Reid, Fowler, Kinsey, D Lane and Sidebottom

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Speakers Panel (Licensing) meeting held on 19 October 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

22. UPDATE ON THE RECENT TAXI DISPUTE

The Licensing Manager provided a verbal report to the Panel on the recent taxi dispute in Tameside.

It was reported that on the 13 and 23 October 2015 local taxi drivers staged a protest on the borough's roads due to a number of issues including the vehicle age policy, the test, fares, MOT's and freedom of information requests.

The Licensing Manager informed the Panel that he had not formally been made aware of the planned protest or the reasons for it but once notified a meeting was arranged to discuss driver's issues. A number of minor issues were resolved and it was confirmed that although taxis were legally exempt from MOT's, due to having frequent compliance tests, this was causing driver's problems when they were purchasing insurance online. Therefore it was agreed that MOT's would be made available from January 2016.

The Panel heard that taxi drivers were also asking for a lower age limit policy for vehicles. It was confirmed that the age of new vehicles entering a fleet was five years old and taxi drivers were requesting this be raised to seven years old. Existing private hire vehicles could be up to ten years old and wheelchair friendly vehicles could be up to 15 years old. It was agreed that policies would be reviewed and a report would be brought to a future Panel meeting.

Other issues raised included inconsistencies in the way vehicles were tested at different garages across the borough, fees and variations with meters and fares charged. It was confirmed that all freedom of information requests had been responded to.

It was agreed that the Licensing Manager provide an update on the situation to the Panel at their next meeting.

RESOLVED:
That the update be noted.

23. TRAINING/LEGISLATION UPDATE

James Button, of James Button & Co Solicitors, provided a training session for Members on taxi licensing.

24. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at the meeting.

CHAIR