
MEETING	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE	4 JANUARY 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS GILLIES (CHAIR), HORTON, HYMAN AND MOORE (VICE-CHAIR)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR B WATSON

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

15. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

16. INSTALLATION OF CCTV CAMERAS IN HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES LICENSED BY THE CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Members considered a report that informed them of the request by York Taxi Association and York Private Hire Association for permission to install CCTV in licensed vehicles.

The Licensing Officer reported that there had been an increase in incidents reported regarding assaults, non-payment of fares and other nuisance behaviour in relation to taxis. A pilot scheme, whereby CCTV was installed in three taxis, took place over the summer of 2007 and there was a noticeable decrease in the number of incidents that took place in these vehicles. It was reported that the driver of the vehicle would not have control over the activation device which would be triggered by either opening a door or starting the engine of the vehicle.

Members discussed the kind of system that would be used and agreed that as long as the system met the requirements set out by the City of York Council then it did not need to be purchased from a particular provider. Members also felt that the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice should be adhered to in terms of length of time material could be stored and who could access the material.

Members were presented with the following options:

- Option 1** Members are recommended to approve the installation of CCTV in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles licensed by the City of York Council, subject to the conditions contained in the report. The installation is voluntary and all costs borne by the vehicle proprietor.
- Option 2** Members are recommended to approve the installation of CCTV in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles licensed by the City of York Council with modified or additional conditions. The installation is voluntary and all costs borne by the vehicle proprietor.
- Option 3** Reject the application, however, if no conditions are adopted then proprietors will continue to install cameras which may not comply with the conditions set out in paragraph 15 and so not ensure evidential integrity and they may infringe a person's human rights.

RESOLVED: That Members approve option 2 as set out in the report with the following conditions:¹

1. That the system installed is approved by the City of York Council
2. That the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice is adhered to
3. That the product installed conforms with the following:
 - Personal safety – when fitted a camera lens and equipment should present no impact danger to passengers.
 - The quality of recorded images should be of sufficient quality during all lighting conditions to continually demonstrate their strong deterrent value.
 - Passengers should be aware that they are being recorded. The vehicle will carry appropriate signs, approved by the Council, informing the public that camera surveillance is active in the vehicle.
 - Encryption of images stored – the images contained in the recording device may only be downloaded by an authorised officer of the Council or by a Police Officer. The manufacturer will supply the Council with de-encryption software free of charge.
 - Has an appropriate activation device.

- The recording system and memory card or other image memory recording system within the vehicle and away from public access.

REASON: So that users adhere to the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice and if approved, Members indicate to the Trade that the system is purchased, owned and operated by the licence holder and that the take up is voluntary.

Action Required

1. Liaise with the York Taxi Association and Private Hire Association and update them with the Committee's decision. KS
Use the local media and trade magazines to make CCTV companies aware of the City of York Council's standards and conditions relating to CCTV installation in taxis.

17. REVISION OF PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE CONDITIONS

Members considered a report that sought to reflect recent changes made to hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions in relation to vehicle colour and luggage capacity and to amend private hire vehicle licence conditions.

The Licensing Officer reported that, in light of the recent changes, private hire vehicle conditions needed to be amended to include a new condition stating:

‘All private hire vehicles licensed by the City of York Council for the first time shall not be of the colour black.’

This will not be retrospective for existing licensed black private hire vehicles.

It was also reported that private hire vehicles should meet the following requirement regarding a minimum luggage capacity:

‘That the licensed vehicle shall have a luggage space, separate from the passenger compartment, which is capable of holding at a minimum two suitcases, a large one measuring 720mm x 460mm x 280mm and a medium one 660mm x 430mm x 280mm and a folded wheelchair (not at the same time). This condition shall not apply to vehicles already licensed by the Council.’

Members discussed the fact that there was no timetable for implementing these changes. Some Members felt that for fairness private hire vehicles should meet similar timescales for change as hackney carriage vehicles. Members requested that the Head of Licensing and Bereavement Services report back to a future meeting with some proposals on timescales.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following amendments be made to the private hire vehicle licence conditions:¹
 - ‘All private hire vehicles licensed by the City of York Council for the first time shall not be of the colour black.’
 - This will not be retrospective for existing licensed black private hire vehicles.
 - It was also reported that private hire vehicles should meet the following requirement regarding a minimum luggage capacity:
 - ‘That the licensed vehicle shall have a luggage space, separate from the passenger compartment, which is capable of holding at a minimum two suitcases, a large one measuring 720mm x 460mm x 280mm and a medium one 660mm x 430mm x 280mm and a folded wheelchair (not at the same time). This condition shall not apply to vehicles already licensed by the Council.’
2. That the Head of Licensing and Bereavement Services report back to a future meeting with some proposals on timescales for implementing the above conditions.²

REASON: To improve the quality of the hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in the city.

Action Required

1. Implement the approved changes in relation to licensing private hire vehicles KS
2. That the Head of Licensing and Bereavement Services report back to a future meeting with some proposals on timescales for implementing the conditions in relation to licensing private hire vehicles KS

Councillor I Gillies, Chair
[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.35 pm].