

LICENSING COMMITTEE
(NON LICENSING ACT 2003
FUNCTIONS)

Agenda Item 22

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Taxi Marshals*
Date of Meeting: **4 March 2010**
Report of: *Director of Environment*
Contact Officer: Name: Jean Cranford Tel: 29-2550
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report seeks committee approval to amend hackney carriage vehicle fees to cover the cost of taxi marshals.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee approves a hackney carriage vehicle fee of £203 including a £23 supplement to fund taxi marshalling.
- 2.2 That the Director is authorised to arrange necessary publication of notices.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 On 27th November 2008, a report was submitted to Licensing Committee (Non-Licensing Act 2003), seeking an increase in fares to fund taxi marshalling following a successful trial period of taxi marshalling funded via the Sudanese Taxi Forum. The estimated cost for providing taxi marshals at that time was approximately £43,000 p.a. Minutes show “15.8 The Members felt that this measure was worthwhile implementing but it should be funded by all interested stakeholders and partners in the city and that Cabinet should look more closely into options for funding the scheme.

“15.9 **RESOLVED** – to recommend that the Director of Environment does not include the vehicle licence fee in the standing charges used in the formula to calculate the maximum normal daytime fare for hackney carriages”.

- 3.2 During 2009, a one-off £5,000 funding for taxi marshals was obtained from the Home Office via the Community Safety Partnership. This enabled two teams of taxi marshals to operate at taxi ranks agreed as part of Operation Marble between 20th November 2009 and 31st March 2010. The Managing Director of City Cabs tendered and appointed a local security firm. The Operation Marble inspector was given deployment authority to

complement policing of three busy city centre ranks: West Street, East Street and Old Ship Hotel. Sussex Police were pleased with this facility.

- 3.3 At Taxi Forum on 13th January 2010, taxi marshals were discussed again. Members of the forum agreed that taxi marshals assist the general public, Sussex Police and taxi drivers. From recent experience, costs for providing two teams of taxi marshals for a year were now found to have reduced and would be approximately £12,000 and that if this were split between the hackney carriage vehicle licence holders, it would cost £23 per year per hackney carriage vehicle licence holder. This would mean that the current fee of £180 would increase to £203 per year. The forum agreed that this would be acceptable and asked officers to bring this recommendation to committee for approval.

4. CONSULTATION:

- 4.1 Increase in fees impacts upon livelihoods so consultation must take place with interested parties.
- 4.2 Brighton & Hove City Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Forum, council's finance officer and legal services.
- 4.3 Sussex Police comment: From the police perspective, the new scheme has been well received by the trade, members of the public and police officers who are now released from this critical role and able to revert to their core duties, in support of the night time economy. Financial support from the taxi companies is welcomed and appropriate as a sustainable way forward. Chief Inspector Simon Nelson and Sgt Peter Castleton.
- 4.4 The published notice gives 28 days for objections to be lodged. If objections are made and not withdrawn, a report will be made to the committee to consider objections and any variation of the fee.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Revenue: The net effect on the council's revenue budget should be nil, as the increased revenue received will cover the cost of providing the marshals.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw

Date: 21/01/2010

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The power to fix fees for hackney carriages is under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Lawyer Consulted: Rebecca Sidell

Date: 04/02/2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Safe late night transport protects passengers in vulnerable situations.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The role of the taxi trade is included in the Local Transport Plan which identifies it as a key element in providing sustainable transport choices. Funding taxi marshals by including the cost in the hackney carriage vehicle licence fee would make provision of taxi marshals a sustainable option rather than ad hoc as and when funding streams have been successfully applied for.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Sufficient late night transport to reduce public place violent crime is recognised in the community safety, crime reduction and drugs strategy. Taxi marshals also enable Sussex Police, via Operation Marble, to operate in areas away from ranks with taxi marshals.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The transport industry should be safe, profitable and be a positive experience for residents and visitors.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Tourism needs to provide a warm welcome to visitors and the tourism strategy depends upon effective partnerships with transport operators particularly, to achieve safe late night dispersal for the night time economy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None.

Documents In Members' Rooms:

None.

Background Documents:

None.