



Committee and Date Licensing and Safety Sub-Committee
Wednesday 9 th January 2013
10.30am

Item
6
Public

**Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Town Police Clauses Act 1847**

Application for a new Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence for a saloon vehicle in Zone Four (former Borough of Shrewsbury & Atcham)

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider whether a saloon hackney carriage should be permitted to be licensed for Zone Four (former Borough of Shrewsbury and Atcham).
- 1.2 Shropshire Council policy for licensed hackney carriages in Zone Four is that all vehicles shall be wheelchair accessible. Eight proprietors of saloon vehicles have had the benefit of three years' of grandfather rights. These rights expired on renewal of their hackney carriage licence in 2012. One proprietor was given approval to licence a new saloon vehicle up until 31 March 2012, due to exceptional personal circumstances. All proprietors were notified that their vehicles would not be licensed for Zone Four upon renewal and inviting representations to be made if proprietors consider that exceptional circumstances would justify licensing their vehicle outside of policy.
- 1.3 At Its meeting on 29th February 2012 the Licensing and Safety Committee agreed that all saloon vehicle applications for Zone Four be referred to them for determination.
- 1.4 Mr Clifford Weston has submitted a new application for a non-wheelchair accessible Vauxhall Vectra. His exceptional circumstances are his medical condition.

2. Recommendations

That the application for a Hackney Carriage Licence be refused, on the grounds that there are no exceptional circumstances to licence the vehicle outside of Policy.

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

There are no risks associated with this report.

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report, although there is a right of appeal on the refusal to grant a hackney carriage licence.

REPORT

5. Background

- 5.1 Mr Clifford Weston has applied for a new Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence. The vehicle is a Vauxhall Vectra Registration Number M11 GCK. The application is for Zone 4. The vehicle is not wheelchair accessible.
- 5.2 Hackney carriage policy since the formation of Shropshire Council in April 2009 has been that hackney carriages in Zone Four would be wheelchair accessible. Following consultation with the trade, revised hackney carriage/private hire policies came into effect on 1st October 2011. The requirement for vehicles to be wheelchair accessible remained to be policy for Zone Four. Saloon vehicles can be licensed as hackney carriages in Zone One (former District of Bridgnorth), Zone Two (Former District of North Shropshire), Zone Three (former Borough of Oswestry and Zone Five (former District of South Shropshire).
- 5.3 Mr Weston currently has a Zone 4 hackney carriage vehicle (HV0526), which is wheelchair accessible (Fiat Doblo registration number NK56 DWX). That licence expires on 9th July 2013. This is a new application. Members have requested that applications for saloon vehicles in Zone Four be determined by the Licensing and Safety Committee.

6. Taxi Policy

Zones

A hackney carriage vehicle would be restricted to working in one zone only. 'Zone' relates to the areas of Shropshire district boundaries prior to the formation of a Unitary Council, Zone One (former District of Bridgnorth), Zone Two (Former District of North Shropshire), Zone Three (former Borough of Oswestry), Zone Four (former Borough of Shrewsbury and Atcham) and Zone Five (former District of South Shropshire).

All vehicles licensed for Zone Four would be wheelchair accessible.

7. Officer Observations

- 7.1 The Licensing Officer does not believe there are any exceptional circumstances to justify licensing this vehicle in Zone 4.

7.2 Of the saloon vehicles licensed in Zone 4 as hackney's which have been considered at Committee, three applications have been approved and five have been refused. (One of the refusals was overturned on appeal in the Magistrates Court and one appeal is outstanding).

7.3 The written submission from Mr Weston indicated that the exceptional circumstances were on medical grounds. Mr Weston's GP, Dr Russell, has advised that Mr Weston has a long history of low back pain and left-sided sciatica. He struggles with lifting especially wheelchairs. An automatic vehicle is more tolerable (a copy of the letter from Mr Weston's GP is attached as an appendix hereto)

8. Options for Consideration

8.1 The options available to the Committee, under the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 when considering such information, are as follows:

- To allow the vehicle to be licensed outside of the current policy
- Not to allow the vehicle to be licensed outside the current policy

8.2 Should the Committee refuse an application the applicant may appeal to a Magistrates' Court within 21 days from the date on which he was notified of the decision. Should the Magistrates uphold the decision of the council, the applicant has further recourse to the Crown Court.

9. Analysis of Options

The legislation allows the Licensing Authority to attach additional conditions to hackney carriage licences.

10. Standard of Decision Making

10.1 This report will be updated at the meeting if necessary to take account of any additional relevant information received after publication.

10.2 Members should not allow themselves to pre-determine or to be prejudiced in favour of or opposed to the application until they have had an opportunity to consider all the pertinent facts.

10.3 Members should be aware that as they are acting in a quasi-judicial role as regards this licensing matter, they should remain in the room so that they hear all the evidence on which the decision will be based.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Hackney Carriage Policy 1st April 2009 and 1st October 2011.

Licensing Committee Report and Minutes (30th June 2010)

Strategic Licensing Committee Report and Minutes (8th June 2011) Licensing and Safety Report and Minutes (29th February 2012)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley

Local Member

Appendices

Letter from Dr Russell 20/11/2012