

MINUTES of a meeting of the HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE GROUP held in the Council Chamber on THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER, 2004.

Present: Councillor P A Hyde (Chairman) (In the Chair)

Councillors: J G Coxon, D Howe, and J B Webster

Officers: Miss M Lister and Mr J E Peters

Apologies: Councillor R A Evans

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests.

#### **442. MINUTES**

... Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2004 (copy previously circulated and retained with the official copy of the minutes).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Group held on 21 July 2004 be approved as a correct record.

#### **443. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That in pursuance of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

#### **444.\*\* LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 SECTION 75(3) APPLICATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE REQUIREMENT TO DISPLAY A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION PLATE**

... Consideration was given to the report of the Manager of Central Support (copy previously circulated and retained with the official copy of the minutes).

The purpose of the report was to request members to determine an application for an exemption from the requirement to display a private hire vehicle identification plate on a licensed private hire vehicle.

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and explained the legislative requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which stated that the Council was required to issue a plate or disk identifying a licensed vehicle. The Act also allowed the local authority to specify in a notice either certain occasions when the plate need not be displayed or alternatively the local authority could issue a notice which could be carried in lieu of the plate being displayed.

Chairman's initials

The Senior Licensing Officer gave details of the application by the driver and referred members to the relevant considerations section in the report which gave some direction on factors which should be taken into account when determining an application under Section 75 of the 1976 Act.

The report set out the options open to the Group when making their determination in respect of the request. The Senior Licensing Officer asked members to note that officers had already issued an exemption from the requirement to display a plate on the licensed vehicle when it was used in connection with weddings.

... The applicant had supplied officers with items of publicity for his company including a business card, leaflet, voucher offering discount, a copy entry on yell.com and a printed copy of the company's website showing the type of services offered. (Copies of each of these items were attached as appendices to the report and retained with the official copy of the minutes).

The licensee addressed the Group in respect of his request. He explained the nature of the executive transport service that he was intending to offer through his company and differentiated between the various types of private hire work that could be undertaken. He was concentrating on offering a luxury chauffeur driven car service for executive transport, weddings and airport transfers. He explained that his application to the Council had been made in response to frequent requests not to display the plate from companies wishing to hire a luxury chauffeur driven car for executive transport use in connection with their business. He stated that he understood the legislative requirement to display a plate and he did not wish to make an application for the exemption to be extended beyond executive chauffeuring work which he charged at an hourly rate and which required the wearing of a chauffeur's uniform.

Members asked the licensee several questions. They sought clarification on the exemption and the executive side of his company's business and asked what was the disadvantage of displaying a plate on his vehicle when undertaking executive type work. The licensee also answered questions on publicity for his company, method of invoicing customers, chauffeuring experience, his booking system and his future intentions for his company if the business was successful.

Members sought clarification from the Senior Licensing Officer on the inspection of private hire operator records, the duration of licences, licence renewal procedures and previous requests made to the Council for an exemption to display plates on licensed vehicles.

Concern was voiced that public safety could be endangered if vehicles were permitted not to display plates. In those circumstances, the public could not identify that a vehicle was in fact a licensed private hire vehicle and, arguably, this could pose a risk to members of the public especially if bogus or unlicensed vehicles were operating in an area.

At 6.59pm the licensee and the Senior Licensing Officer left the meeting while the Group deliberated. They were both invited to return to the room at 7.10pm.

Chairman's initials

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the request for an exemption from the requirement to display a vehicle identification plate in respect of vehicle registration FN54 MGE be granted in respect of contracted and invoiced executive transport only.
- (b) That the exemption be effective until the expiry of the vehicle licence on 31 October 2005.
- (c) That officers schedule an inspection of the Licensee's private hire operator records in June 2005 in order to establish the division of contracted executive hire work and standard private hire work.
- (d) That officers be permitted to re-issue the exemption on the same terms as the grant if they were satisfied that, on application for renewal, the licensee's business operation remained exceptional.

Councillor D Howe requested that his vote against the grant of the exemption be recorded.

The meeting terminated at 7.12pm.

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