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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2016

A MEETING of the LICENSING COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2016, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Ken Keegan
Vice-Chair - Councillor Linda Curran

Councillors Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Neil Gethin, James Hart, Charlie Hogarth, John McHale, David Nevett and Clive Stone.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elsie Butler, Bev Chapman and Steve Cox.

15 Declarations of Interest, if any.

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

16 Minutes of the Licensing Committee Meeting held on 15th October, 2015.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 15th October, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy - Minor Amendments to Policy and Vehicle Conditions.

Members considered a report that detailed changes to be made to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The Business Safety and Licensing Manager outlined the key points to note within the document, which reflected recent legislative changes concerning the duration of driver and private hire operator licences.

It was reported that as a result of changes brought about by the Deregulation Act 2015, all Driver licences issued, would now remain in force for a period of 3 years, aside from in cases where special circumstances applied. Licences would still be issued on a case by case provision, but there was limited discretion to reduce a licence for less than a 3 year period. This would largely apply to applicants who were not eligible to remain in the country for the 3 year period as a result of immigration leave, and therefore these licences would only be issued for their permitted duration in the country. Likewise, with Operator Licences, these would be issued for a 5 year period, unless similar circumstances applied. Members noted that all checks remained the same prior to the issue of licences and action could still be taken where warranted against both drivers and operators.

A second change to the Policy that was outlined to Members with regard to insurance write offs in respect of Hackney carriage and private hire vehicle specifications. It was reported that any vehicle classified as a category A or B vehicle write off, would not be issued a licence at

all, and any vehicle categorised as C or D write off would now only be issued a licence if an independent vehicle inspection had been undertaken to ensure that the vehicle was roadworthy. In the past, cars were subject to a Vehicle Inspection Check (VIC) but the DVLA and VOSA ceased to operate this scheme in October 2015. Category C and D write offs fall into the repairable category, but were often deemed by insurance companies uneconomic to do so. However, if an owner was prepared to take on the cost themselves, and if any repair work was carried out to a safe and satisfactory standard and the Roadworthy Vehicle Inspection was carried out by a competent and independent engineer, they would be considered as suitable for licensing.

Further to the presentation of the report, Members of the Committee were afforded the opportunity to comment and raise any questions they may have. A number of queries with regard to the Roadworthy Vehicle Inspections, but officers endeavoured to provide answers to all the queries raised, and assured Members that engineers based at the North Bridge Depot had been consulted with regard to these changes to ensure that necessary checks were in place.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee approve the amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, as detailed in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report.