

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
WBC Licensing and Control Committee 'A' of  
Worthing Borough Council**

**Gordon Room, Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing**

**Tuesday 26 March 2013**

Councillor John Rogers (Chairman)

Noel Atkins	*Roy Barraclough
Keith Bickers	*Christine Brown
Michael Cloake	Norah Fisher
*Paul Howard	Diane Jones
Roger Oakley	Michael Donin
Robert Smytherman	Val Turner
Vicky Vaughan	Vic Walker

\*Absent

**LCCA/12-13/21 Declarations of substitutions**

There were no substitutions

**LCCA/12-13/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest

**LCCA/12-13/23 Public Question Time**

There were no questions or statement made by the public

**LCCA/12-13/24 Minutes**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Control Committee 'A' held on the 6 December 2012 be approved as the correct record.

**LCCA/12-13/25 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no items raised under urgency provisions

**LCCA/12-13/26 Rear-loading wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages**

Before the Committee was a report by the Executive Head of Housing, Health and Community Safety, copies of which had been distributed to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 5. Worthing Borough Council had in place conditions of licence that allowed only side access wheelchair accessible hackney carriages to be licensed unless the taxi was equipped with a powered lift at the rear. Members were requested to consider an application to licence a rear entry wheelchair accessible vehicle as a hackney carriage by amending the conditions in place as part of the Council's taxi & private hire handbook. Members considered the matter in September 2012 and resolved to make the required amendments but deferred their decision so that further information could be provided by officers. Much of the information Members requested was contained in the report and the Committee was requested to further consider the matter.

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report to Members. Members were told that In light

of the Committee's decision in September a risk assessment of Worthing's taxi ranks and the suitability of rear access vehicles to use these was commissioned. The report of the Council's Senior Corporate Safety Officer recommended that in the case of Hackney vehicles adapted for disabled passengers, wheelchair access should be from the side rather than the rear of the vehicle. Councillors were told further that Risk Assessments requested from the applicant had not been forthcoming and that a requested equalities impact assessment would cost £12k and would require Member approval for the expenditure.

The Senior Licensing Officer answered questions from Members regarding budget approval and the possibility for partial approval of the application.

Representatives from the Worthing Taxi Association (WTA) were invited to give a representation in opposition to the application. A representative of the WTA reiterated objections given at the meeting in September, the main reason being was that the taxi rank bays in Worthing were not either designed or suitable for rear access taxis. The WTA representative answered questions regarding the refusal of access to disabled passengers.

The applicant made a presentation to the Committee in support of the Committee. He purported that the supply of an M1 certificate was more sufficient than a risk assessment. He stated that there was a clear need for the rear access vehicle which was environmentally friendly and affordable. He gave examples of other authorities that had licensed rear access vehicles. The applicant noted that the authority currently allowed rear access taxis with tail lifts and felt that rear access taxis with ramps should also be allowed. He reported to the Committee that taxis with disabled side access obstructed pathways and presented a health and safety risk.

A representative from a company supplying ramped rear access taxis made a representation to the Committee. Members were told that the vehicles were tested to the highest standards and that a large number of local authorities licensed the vehicles in question. The specification of the vehicle was detailed and how representative felt this benefited disabled users.

The applicant and vehicle representative answered questions relating to the safety of the vehicle and their perceived suitability of taxi ranks within the Borough.

*The meeting adjourned at 7.00pm to consider the application*

*The meeting reconvened at 7.14pm*

In giving the decision the Chairman stated that all representation in writing and made at the hearing had been listened to.

**Resolved:**

- i) that the current conditions regarding wheelchair access to hackney carriages be re-iterated and the application to licence rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles as hackney carriages be refused;
- ii) that all vehicle drivers with wheelchair accessible vehicles undertake disability training in due course;
- iii) that an application be made to West Sussex County Council for a feasibility study into the provision of suitable bays in the Borough's taxi ranks for rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles.

**Reasons for decision:**

- i) the Committee would not ignore advice from its senior corporate and public safety officer;
- ii) the Committee believes that the ranks within the Borough are unsuitable for rear

loading wheelchair accessible vehicles as hackney carriages.

### **LCCA/12-13/27 Hackney Carriage Tariff - Fuel Surcharge**

Before the Committee was a report by the Executive Head of Housing, Health and Community Safety, copies of which had been distributed to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 6. Members were requested to consider and determine the request from Worthing Taxi Association (WTA) to continue to allow a fuel surcharge to the authorised tariff, as a result of continuing high price of fuel.

#### **Resolved:**

- i) that the Council approve the continued implementation of a fixed supplement of 20 pence per journey;
- ii) that Officers monitor the price of fuel and bring back the issue to Members as and When is necessary.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.00pm, it having commenced at 6pm.

**Chairman**