

Licensing and Appeals Committee

At 7.00 pm on Monday 3rd July, 2023

Held as a Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, Northants, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Shadow Members

Councillor Jonathan Ekins (Chair)
Councillor Ross Armour
Councillor Lyn Buckingham
Councillor John Currall
Councillor Clive Hallam
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell

Councillor Jennie Bone
Councillor Dr Anup Pandey
Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes
Councillor Lee Wilkes

Officers

Also in attendance – Councillor

The Chair welcomed members and the viewing public to the meeting.

7 Apologies for absence

Resolved to note that an apology was received from Councillor Waters.

8 Members' declarations of Interest

The chair invited those who wished to do so to make a declaration of interest.

Resolved that no declarations were made.

9 Minutes of the Licensing and Appeals Committee held on 11th October 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11 October 2022 were received.

It was proposed by Councillor Currall and seconded by Councillor Bone that the minutes be adopted. On being put to the vote the minutes were adopted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Resolved that the minutes be approved and signed as an accurate record.

10 Hackney Carriage De-zoning, Hackney Carriage Byelaws and Hackney Carriage Number Limits

The report of the Assistant Director Regulatory Services was received to enable the committee to consider whether to retain the current Hackney Carriage zones, or

whether to remove the zones and implement the associated actions arising from the decision and whether to put this out for consultation.

The Licensing and Service Support Manager, Russell Howell, presented the report detailing the current areas which remained as they were under the four sovereign authorities, with four separate systems in place for each zone, including licences, vehicle plates, byelaws, fare tariffs, and fees and charges.

Each zone continues to have to licence its own hackney carriages and drivers and operates to the byelaws in existence in each area. It also means that a driver and vehicle wishing to operate across the whole of North Northamptonshire would need four licences and would need to separately set fees and fares for each of the zones.

It was for the council to decide whether to retain the existing zones or to abolish them.

Should the four zones be abolished it would also be necessary to consider the implementation of new hackney carriage byelaws for the authority. The Department for Transport has a set of model byelaws, which can be modified if required.

A further item for consideration would be the issue of limitation of hackney carriage numbers. Currently the only area which has a limit on the number of licences permitted is Corby.

The number of hackney carriages licensed in North Northamptonshire was detailed in the report with Corby having 114, East Northants 35, Kettering 45 and Wellingborough 34. Corby, despite having a limitation, has more hackney carriages than private hire vehicles, with the assumption that the hackney carriage trade picks up a more significant proportion of the private hire market in Corby than elsewhere.

If the zones are removed, it will remove the limit on hackney carriages in the Corby area.

The benefits to having one zone were detailed within the report along with possible disadvantages.

Should the committee wish to explore the creation of one zone then permissions would be sought from the Executive to go out to public consultation.

The chair thanked Mr Howell for the detailed report and explained to the committee that the decision before them was whether to explore the option of one zone and to seek the permission of the Executive to go out for consultation.

Members discussed the report and asked various questions of clarity as detailed further below.

Was it correct that if a passenger, for example, was picked up in Wellingborough and taken to Corby that the driver would not then be permitted to take a different passenger back to Wellingborough?

This was confirmed to be correct as they would currently be working in a different zone.

Clarity was sought on whether hackney carriages are more disabled friendly. It was confirmed that Corby had the most disabled suitable vehicles. There was one in Wellingborough and more were required. New vehicles would need to be DDA compliant.

Questions were raised about whether drivers would need to undertake a new 'Knowledge Test'. It was confirmed that the detail of the new test had not been finalised, but it would likely include how to get to areas in the whole zone, so using arterial roads, key landmarks, such as Railway stations, rather than detail of each street in North Northamptonshire. It was unlikely that an existing licensed driver would fail such test and every endeavour to assist a driver would be offered by the team. There would be a one-day training course for drivers to attend.

Members asked how the progression would take place. It was confirmed that this would relate to new applications and when a licence expired.

Most members considered that moving to one zone would be beneficial to both the trade and public and considered that permission to consult should be recommended to the Executive.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilkes and seconded by Councillor Maxwell that the Executive be asked to progress a consultation process and to also review the byelaws. On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

Resolved to recommend to the Executive:

- (i) that a consultation process be undertaken on the potential removal of the current four hackney carriage zones and replacement with one North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) zone;
- (ii) that the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws be reviewed.

11 Close of Business

The chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.55pm.

Chair.....

Dated.....

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified