

# Crawley Borough Council

## Minutes of Licensing Committee

Monday 12 June 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor R S Fiveash (Chair)  
Councillor M L Ayling (Vice-Chair)

Councillors T G Belben, N J Boxall, B J Burgess, K L Jaggard, M G Jones,  
K McCarthy, C J Mullins, D M Peck, C Portal Castro,  
B J Quinn, T Rana, R Sharma and J Tarrant.

### Also in Attendance:

Councillor F Guidera

### Officers Present:

Tony Baldock	Environmental Health Manager
Bill Nailen	Licensing Officer
Astrid Williams	Senior Lawyer
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager

### 1. Apologies for Absence:

No apologies were received

### 2. Members' Disclosure of Interests

The following disclosures of interests were made by Members:-

Member	Minute Number	Subject	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor N J Boxall	Minute 4	Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2017.	Personal and Prejudicial Interest - his employers are an accountancy firm used by a number of the hackney carriage and min cab drivers and firms.

All Members of the Committee confirmed that had been lobbied by means of a letter received from the Hackney Carriage Association.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on [2 November 2017](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Licensing Sub Committee Minutes

The minutes of the following meeting of the Licensing Sub Committee were approved as a correct record and signed by the Member indicated in the table below, subject to in Minute 1. Appointment of Chair – That the following words be added to the minute *'That it be noted Councillor Burgess objected to the proposed Chair':-*

Date	Sub Committee Minutes	Minutes signed by
<a href="#">6 March 2017</a>	Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence to 'County Mall News', 53A County Mall, Station Way, Northgate, Crawley, RH10 1FF	Councillor Fiveash on behalf of Councillor Pickett who Chaired the Panel

### 5. Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2017.

The Committee considered report [PES/250](#) of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services. The Environmental Services Manager guided the Committee through the report highlighting a number of the key issues, which included:

- In September 2011 the Committee decided to implement a policy of limiting hackney carriage vehicle licences granted by the Council.
- The policy ought to be kept under review, and the Council should decide whether or not to continue the policy having regard to an unmet demand survey conducted every 3 years. In the event that the survey concludes that there is no significant unmet demand, the Council may decide to continue to limit the number of hackney carriages.
- The Council commissioned CTS Consultancy to undertake the survey. The survey involved extensive consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade, the public and other special interest groups of hackney carriage users.
- The conclusion of the survey conducted by CTS Consultancy was that there was no evidence of any significant unmet demand.

The Councillors were then guided by the Environmental Health Manager through the key aspects of the CTS 'Crawley – Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Study' report, in doing so he also highlighted other relevant issues. These included:

- The Council had a wheelchair accessible policy, but the existing license holders with vehicle plate numbers 1-73, were exempt, from the policy requirements.

- However having a disjointed policy had created a source of friction within the trade as those who had to provide a wheelchair accessible vehicle felt that it was not a level playing field due to the increased costs associated with an accessible vehicle. This was balanced against the number of customers requiring this type of vehicle.
- Since November 2002 the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles had increased from 7 out of 79 licensed vehicles (8.8%) to 50 out of 123 (61.5%) licensed as of the date of this report.
- The results of the unmet demand survey, together with test enquiries of operators and care homes indicated that there were no problems in passengers obtaining the services of an accessible vehicle.
- However, the survey also revealed that a passenger had waited for a wheel chair accessible vehicle for 25 minutes at the taxi rank in Three Bridges and no vehicle was available.

Following a request, in advance of the meeting, the Chair invited two representatives, Mr Shahzad Abbas Malik and Mr Wajid Mahmood on behalf of the Hackney Carriage Association to address the meeting on the report. The representative raised a number of issues from the report and survey findings, which included:

- Questioning that there was discontent by those drivers that were required to be wheelchair accessibility and those that did not.
- Emphasising that there was a need for a mixed fleet with saloon cars and cars that were wheelchair accessible, as many elderly users found the wheelchair accessible cars difficult to use due to their higher door level, compared to the salon cars. The current mix was considered to be about right.
- Questioned the anecdote over the 25 minute wait for a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Also as part of their address to the Committee the trade representatives raised a number of more general issues relating to hackney carriages but which did not pertain to the report. In response to the comments raised, the Chair noted they had comments and concerns on other issues, but the Committee was unable to address these during the meeting.

In considering the report there was a general feeling of support by the Committee, that the balance and mixed type of hackney carriages across the borough was correct for our residents and their needs. The Committee were pleased that the trade supported the findings of the survey to keep the status quo, which gave the Committee further justification to continue with the current policy.

Members did acknowledge the trade had other concerns but emphasised that this specific meeting was not the correct venue for a wider range of issues raised. However, it was considered that a more general debate on hackney carriages, private hires and 'taxis in general' should be undertaken at a future Licensing Committee, especially as some Councillors had questions and concerns of their own that they would want to be answered and discussed.

The Committee requested that an online link to the CTS 'Crawley – Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Study', be included within the Minutes, which can be found [here](#).

## **RESOLVED**

The Licensing Committee resolved as follows:

1. it confirmed that it had given consideration to the unmet demand survey report which was undertaken on behalf of Crawley Borough Council.
2. that, having given consideration to the unmet demand survey report, the Committee was satisfied there was no significant unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages within the borough.
3. that, the Council would continue the policy of limiting the number of hackney carriage licences issued by Crawley Borough Council, subject to any applicant demonstrating exceptional circumstances.
4. that the limit on the number of hackney carriages would be the number issued as at the date of the meeting.

## **6. Closure of Meeting**

In closing the meeting the Chair invited those Councillors present and the Hackney Carriage Association to email him directly any questions or concerns that they had for the Council to consider. He would then get them collated and those questions and responses received by officers would be presented to a future meeting of the Licensing committee during this municipal year.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm.

**R FIVEASH**  
**Chair**