

Runnymede Borough CouncilRegulatory CommitteeWednesday, 15 March 2023 at 7.44 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Wilson (Chairman), E Gill (Vice-Chairman), J Broadhead, T Burton and V Cunningham (In place of S Saise-Marshall).

Members of the Committee absent: None

**603 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**604 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**605 Hackney Carriage Ranks**

The Committee received for information a report about the number and location of taxi ranks in the borough.

Officers reported that serving the 48 licensed taxis in Runnymede there were 17 hackney carriage ranks across the borough. There were 6 bays at Egham Railway station, and 2 each at the railway stations in Chertsey and Addlestone. In addition, there were 5 bays at Thorpe Park and 2 at Station Parade, Virginia Water.

The railway station bays were provided by South Western Railways under a long standing arrangement with the Council. The current price paid was £500 per bay plus VAT per annum, which it was agreed was beneficial to the drivers who paid for them as part of their vehicle licence fees.

In terms of usage, those at Egham and Chertsey were the most used. It was noted that the bays in Addlestone had been out of service since September 2022 owing to improvement works at the station. Officers agreed to monitor the situation and re-assess if they remained out of commission for longer than a year.

The Committee considered that as a discretionary service providing taxi ranks was still worthwhile and of assistance to the trade. The agreement with South Western Railways compared favourably with other boroughs and those without anything in place.

**606 Taxi Driver Medicals Consultation**

The Committee's approval was sought to launch a public consultation on the current requirements for taxi drivers and the frequency of medicals.

Officers explained that the Council's conditions were more stringent than those required of other types of driver by the DVLA. Therefore, there was desire to mirror their arrangements which would be a financial and administrative saving for the drivers.

Currently drivers had to undergo a medical on application and then every five years

thereafter, and then annually once they reached the age of 60. Annual medicals were also required when drivers had a prescribed medical condition.

The Committee was informed of the age profile of the 89 licensed drivers in Runnymede who would all benefit from the frequency of medicals being relaxed.

Officers proposed that drivers would still need to meet the Group 2 standard as set out in the Department for Transport best practice guidance but that the frequency of medicals be reduced to meet the DVLA's Group 2 timescales. Subject to the outcome of the proposed consultation, drivers would be required to meet the Group 2 standard on application, at age 45 and thereafter every 5 years until the age of 65 when they would be needed annually and in the event of a driver's ability to drive being affected by a medical condition or disability. In such circumstances it was noted that drivers were obligated to disclose this to the licensing authority.

Officers had undertaken a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities whose frequency of medical assessments varied. On balance, the Committee agreed that those proposed for Runnymede were reasonable and proportionate.

The Committee supported the consultation paper to be released to the public and the trade and looked forward to what responses would be received. Members thought it was important to promote the consultation as widely as possible in liaison with the Council's Communications team to reach as many people they could.

Officers would be holding a taxi forum later that month and would encourage drivers to engage with the exercise.

Officers would report the outcome of the Consultation to the next scheduled meeting in June 2023.

**RESOLVED that –**

**A consultation with the public and the taxi trade regarding the proposed amendments to Runnymede's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be approved, to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions set out in the Council's Constitution regarding consultation requirements.**

**607 Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no exempt or confidential items on the agenda.

(The meeting ended at 8.08 pm.)

Chairman