



Borough of Oadby & Wigston

Licensing Committee

21 January 2009

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade – Proposed Good Practice Awards

Report of: Chief Executive
Author: Senior Legal and Licensing Officer

Report Number: 4 b)

NON-EXEMPT

This report is likely to be considered while the meeting is open to press & public

Summary:

This report summarises proposals and arrangements for the Council to honour a licensed driver and a private hire operator annually, by way of an award.

Recommendation:

That Committee agrees to the introduction of an annual good practice award for both licensed drivers and private hire operators, as outlined in this report, to commence in the 2009/2010 financial year.

Level of delegation: Delegated to Committee

Wards affected: All.

Comments of Statutory Officers:

Head of Paid Service: None.
Proper Officer for Financial Affairs: None.
Monitoring Officer: None.

Appendices: None.

Impact Assessments:

Health: No significant impact.
Environment: No significant impact.
Community Safety: No significant impact.
Human Rights: No significant impact.
Equal Opportunities: No significant impact.
Risk Assessment: The risks involved have been taken into account when recommending changes.

Background:

1. As part of its Service Delivery Plan for the 2008/2009 year, the Licensing Section has undertaken a review of the Council's taxi licensing function, with a view to improving efficiency in the way the Section operates and also to improving safety standards for users of the taxi and private hire trade within the Borough.
2. The review has brought about a number of changes to licence requirements which will be implemented, either from 1 January 2009 or 1 April 2009.
3. Consideration has also been given to other ways in which the Council might encourage members of the taxi trade to maintain a good standard of service and customer care. Officers have looked into the possibility of introducing annual awards for both individual drivers and private hire operators.
4. The aim of such awards would be to raise standards in the industry and to boost the public's confidence in the trade.
5. It is suggested that members of the public could be encouraged to draw attention to good examples within the trade and the awards could be determined by a Panel made up of licensing officers and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.
6. Publicity of the voting stage and of the results could be gained through press releases and articles appearing in 'Letterbox' each year.
7. The winners of the awards could be formally presented with a commemorative certificate which would be displayed in the booking office and in the Council Offices.
8. A monetary award could also be provided as an incentive, such as a discount off of the winners next licence fee. It is recommended that this be set at 1/3rd off the drivers licence (which will be £48.33 after 1 April 2009) and 1/3rd off of the annual private hire operators licence fee (£68.66 after 1 April 2009).

Good Driver Award

9. It is considered that drivers nominated would be assessed on the following criteria:-
 - ◆ Driving history
 - ◆ customer service, according to comments made by customers
 - ◆ Standards of dress and personal hygiene
 - ◆ Vehicle condition, following inspection

Good Private Hire Operator Award

10. Similarly, private hire operators would be assessed using the following criteria:-
 - ◆ Operators licence record
 - ◆ Customer service, according to comments made by customers
 - ◆ Adherence to good practice and any local or national initiatives

Financial Implications

11. The financial impact of introducing the scheme in the 2009/2010 year would be in the region of £150 through loss of licence fee income and some minor costs in producing award certificates.

Conclusion

12. Committee is requested to consider approving this scheme, subject to any amendments that it considers necessary.

Background Papers referred to in compiling this report:: None.