

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A

GENERAL LICENSING REGULATORY BOARD

16th JUNE 2010

1. **Present:** Councillors CC Wraith (Chair), Barlow, D Birkinshaw, P Birkinshaw, Bowden, Brook, J Carr, Clarke, Clowery, Gaunt, Howard, Lofts, Mitchell, Picken, Stokes, Sylvester, Wainwright, Wilson and Worton.

2. **Declarations of Personal Interest**

No declarations were made at the meeting.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th march, 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. **Application to renew a Sex Shop License**

The Assistant Director (Regulatory Services) submitted a report on an application from Pulse and Cocktails Ltd for the renewal of their license to use the premises at 462, Doncaster Road, Stairfoot, Barnsley as a Sex Shop.

RESOLVED that the license to use 462, Doncaster Road, Stairfoot, Barnsley be approved in accordance with the previous licenses that have been issued.

5. **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire - Enforcement**

The Assistant Director (Regulatory Services) circulated a briefing note giving details of recent taxi enforcement initiatives undertaken by the Licensing Service.

Reference was made to the ways in which enforcement was undertaken, the involvement of other Partners and agencies and to the reciprocal arrangements in place with other neighbouring authorities.

Particular mention was made to the following:-

- The involvement in enforcement activities at East Midlands and Doncaster airports. It was pleasing to note that following a recent initiative at Doncaster Airport, all Barnsley vehicles had been found to be fully compliant

- There was concern at the 50% failure rate of vehicles presented for inspection at the Smithies Lane Depot. It was reported that many of these failures related to “minor faults” that would be spotted if drivers checked their vehicles prior to inspection or undertook their daily checks as required as a condition of the license. In response to questioning, the Principal Licensing Officer outlined the proactive work that was being undertaken in order to address these problems and it was reported that 20 drivers had now been issued with formal warnings as a result.
- A successful prosecution had been brought against a driver who had been working without any licences or checks, two prosecutions were pending and two appeals against the refusal to grant licences were due to be heard in the Magistrates Court in the near future

RESOLVED that the report be received and the action taken be supported.

6. **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Testing**

Mr D Richardson Assistant Director (Highways, Engineering and Waste Management) and Mr K Glover (Fleet Control officer) attended the meeting to report on the current position with regard to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle testing at the Smithies Lane Depot.

They made particular reference to the following:-

- The ways in which inspections were undertaken and the background to the introduction of the second inspection bay was explained. It was noted that the second bay had increased capacity and flexibility but was only utilised when there was sufficient demand. There was, however, sufficient other work to be undertaken on the authority’s own vehicles to ensure that staff were fully deployed at all times
- The current position with regard to waiting times for appointments which had been significantly reduced
- Staff were working hard to improve efficiency and customer care.
- Vacancies occurring when appointments were missed or cancelled at short notice were offered to taxi proprietors wherever possible.
- Approximately 85% of drivers re-booked their MOT/vehicle test a year in advance
- The Smithies Lane Depot was the few independent testing stations in Barnsley and currently charged £45 for an MOT. It was suggested that this fact should be advertised more widely. It was noted that Mr M Lewis the GMT Money Saving Expert had mentioned the benefits of Local Authority Independent MOT stations and Barnsley had received a mention on the stations website
- The current position with regard to vehicle emissions was outlined and details of the taxi vehicle failure rates could be provided if required. It was noted that the Department of Transport had

recently re issued their Best Practice Guidance which suggested that Local Authorities could look at emissions and it was reported that preliminary work was now ongoing with the pollution control service in this respect

- Details of the driver theory and driving tests were touched upon and particularly as this related to customer care
- Regular enforcement exercises were undertaken. In some circumstances licenses could be reinstated on the same day (if faults were very minor) whilst other more serious faults would require re-inspection at the Smithies Lane Depot (requiring the payment of the appropriate testing fees). Arising out of this discussion, it was suggested that the licence conditions should be amended to make it a mandatory requirement that drivers carry spare bulbs etc. The Principal Licensing Officer stated that this was currently being considered as part of a wider review of licensing conditions consequent upon the re-issuing of the DoT Best Practice Guidance.
- It was noted that more rigorous enforcement was having a marked improvement to vehicle standards and was leading to a change of culture amongst drivers and operators.
- Members were pleased to note the activities of the Private Hire Association who were working proactively to improve standards

RESOLVED that the report be received and the work of the Smithies Lane Depot be supported.

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Chairman

