

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HACKNEY CARRIAGES SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL**

**15 JULY 2004**

**REMIT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL**

**Background**

1. On 24 March 2003 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (R&BBC) adopted a recommendation of its Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the restriction on the number of Hackney Carriages – hereafter called taxis - permitted to operate in the Borough be removed. However this was subject to a Review Panel undertaking a review of rank provision. It was also subject to a review of conditions to be applied to all additional taxi licenses issued. The full decision is reproduced below:

“The Council resolved on 24 March 2003 that the Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19th February 2003 be adopted. These were that:

- (i) the report of the Hackney Carriage Restricted Numbers Policy Review Panel be received;
- (ii) the restriction on the number of hackney carriages permitted to operate in the Borough be removed subject to:
  - (a) vehicle licences 1 to 75 continuing to be issued in respect of any suitable vehicle meeting the Council's hackney carriage licensing conditions in place on 24th April, 2003;
  - (b) vehicle licences 54 to 60 and 71 to 75 continuing to be issued only to vehicles which are suitable for passengers to travel in their wheelchairs should they so wish;
  - (c) a Review Panel undertaking a review of hackney carriage conditions, including consultation with the trade, to consider the conditions to be imposed in respect of any additional vehicle licences issued, i.e. vehicle 76 or higher; and
  - (d) a Review Panel undertaking a review of hackney carriage rank provision;
- (iii) the reviews referred to in (c) and (d) above be undertaken prior to any implementation of the change to the Council's policy; and
- (iv) the Executive be requested to ensure that sufficient resources will be available to carry out the review processes referred to in (ii) (c) and (d) above.

2. On 16th December 1999 the Council recommended that all policies and conditions with regard to vehicle etc licensing be reviewed every 3 years. This review was delayed by the above reports and in January 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee extended the remit of the Scrutiny Review Panel to include the outstanding review of all policies and conditions relating to vehicles etc.

### **Remit of the Panel**

3. Resulting from the above the Panel has three elements to its remit as follows:
  - (i) To undertake a review of hackney carriage rank provision;
  - (ii) To undertake a review of hackney carriage conditions, including consultation with the trade, to consider the conditions to be imposed in respect of any additional vehicle licences issued, i.e. vehicle 76 or higher; and
  - (iii) To undertake a review of all policies and conditions relating to vehicles, drivers and operators.

### **Current Position**

4. Officers have undertaken background research in order to seek out examples of best practice undertaken elsewhere, combined this with their own working knowledge and experience, and sought advice from colleagues to produce the following documents attached for the Panels consideration:

#### **Taxi Rank provision**

5. Review of taxi rank provision in Reigate and Banstead – report commissioned from David Hurdle, Transport Initiatives Officer and Consultant on Travel Plans, Transport strategies and Policies.

#### **Byelaws, Policy and conditions**

6. Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Byelaws, Policy and conditions – officer comments and criteria for change to existing. This review also includes summaries of the most recent public consultations undertaken, Government proposals and associated reports.

### **Purpose of Review Panel**

7. This review varies from others that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may undertake as the Executive has identified three specific areas of the service to review, as set out above.
8. The Panel in concluding its review will need to be sure that its recommendations and conclusions arising from its work are clear and reasoned proposals for consideration by the Executive. If there are financial implications arising from the Panel's review then these should be set out within its report.

## **Timetable**

9. This 'first' meeting of the Panel is primarily to bring it up to date with progress and to consider further working arrangements. Part of the work associated with the review will be to undertake consultation with the trade and it is proposed that this could be through questionnaires, meetings with the trade and online feedback through the website. If this approach was appropriate the Panel may require 3 further meetings.
10. The Panel may need two meetings to agree the process for undertaking the review and possibly one or two to receive the conclusions of the consultation and to agree its findings and report.
11. It is envisaged that the consultation would be undertaken for 6 weeks starting in August. If that was an agreeable timetable it would allow for the Panel's report to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 November and to the Executive on 8 December 2004.

## **Corporate Governance**

12. It is open to the Review Panel to determine how it wishes to operate. Some of the issues that it should address at its first meeting are:
  - Whether meetings of the Panel should be open to the press and public to attend;
  - Location and timing of meetings;
  - Who it wishes to receive evidence from in gathering information;
  - Whether it wishes to Co-Opt appropriate specialists to advise the Panel;
  - Whether to put in place any publicity arrangements to advertise the meetings such as press releases, posters, articles in the Borough News and posting information on the website about the Review etc;
  - What additional information the Panel requires to undertake the Review;
  - Whether it wishes to establish a mechanism of taking questions/statements from community members at its meetings;
  - To consider whether to invite witnesses to present evidence and answer questions;
  - To agree the overall scope of the questions to be put to witnesses i.e. not the actual detailed questions but the general approach to assist in the overall preparation and any necessary resource allocation.

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