

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 18TH SEPTEMBER 2007
Report of the Deputy Director of Partnerships and Customer Services

ITEM 6 HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING – METER SPECIFICATION

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider a proposal to amend the specification of taxi meters to be fitted to Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council.

2. Recommendation

Committee is recommended to approve the proposal that all existing Hackney Carriage Vehicles and any new Hackney carriage vehicles be fitted with a taxi meter which is date and time controlled, is tamper-proof, and has no facility to be altered by the driver, and which is approved by the Council.

3. Report (Reasons)

The proposal is to require all taximeters fitted to taxis, licensed by the Council, to be of a similar standard, complying with the above requirements. This would provide some degree of protection to the travelling public in that they would be charged the correct rate, and conversely, protects the driver from false allegations of overcharging.

One such meter is the Cygnus MR300. This meter has full calendar facility, is automatic, and cannot in any way be interfered with by the operator, without there being obvious signs on the seal of that interference. (This is not a requirement that only this type of meter can be installed, but that meters of a similar specification must be installed). The full range of acceptable meters would be continually reviewed and the testing stations acting for the Council would be kept up to date as to the approved types of meter.

4. Background

Over recent months there have been several complaints concerning allegations of overcharging by Hackney drivers, for journeys undertaken, some of which were metered but some of which were on an agreed verbal basis prior to the commencement of a journey. The latter are difficult to police, however, the metered journeys, can be dealt with relatively easily.

There are a number of types of taxi meters fitted (mainly) by two particular companies to the taxis licensed by Charnwood Borough Council. These vary from vehicle to vehicle, but also differ with the control mechanism where some of those can be manually operated or altered. This situation can give rise to overcharging by the driver, by entering the wrong tariff on the meter. It could also lead to undercharging, of course. Because of the varying types of meters fitted to licensed taxis, it can be difficult to confirm that an overcharge has taken place.

Background Papers: A selection of manufacturer's brochures will be available at the meeting

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