

**Extract from Minutes of Yeovil Town Council Meeting
held on 3 December 2013**

8/387 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Council considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 6 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the benefits of the proposed “knowledge” test, which it was felt would ensure that all local taxi journeys were carried out in an effective and efficient manner.

The proposals regarding public liability insurance and the need to demonstrate competence in assisting wheelchair users were also supported, along with the proposed move to issuing triennial driver licences.

Whilst it was acknowledged that there was a need for more wheelchair accessible taxis, it was felt that a better approach would be to set a date in the future by which time all vehicles would need to comply with the proposed requirement. If this approach were taken, it was suggested that a five year period would be reasonable as this would give all proprietors the opportunity to plan ahead and make the necessary investment to meet the additional costs involved.

Reference was also made to the proposal to restrict first-time licences to new vehicles, which it was felt was unreasonable given the existing local and statutory checks and tests that were carried out to ensure that all vehicles regardless of their age met prescribed standards of safety and roadworthiness. However, it was felt that if such a requirement were to be introduced, it should apply to all vehicles from an appropriate future date.

Concern was expressed at the potential adverse impact of the proposed changes in vehicle licence conditions on local taxi service provision. Given the additional costs involved, it was felt that prospective and existing proprietors might decide to trade elsewhere with a resultant reduction in the volume of taxis in and around Yeovil, and that an impact assessment needed to be undertaken by the Licensing Authority to take this factor into consideration.

Members also expressed their support for the planned changes in the MOT requirements and the proposed introduction of a penalty points scheme.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the above-outlined comments be included in the Town Council’s response to the consultation exercise.