
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE 25.06.12

Present: Councillor W.Tudor Owen (Chairman)

Councillors: Eddie Dogan, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Angela Russell, Elfed W. Williams, Gethin G. Williams, Gruffydd Williams

Also Present: Siôn Huws (Propriety Officer), Gwenan M. Williams (Licensing Manager), Geraint B. Edwards (Solicitor) and Gwyn Parry Williams (Members Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Huw Edwards, Peter Read, Ann Williams

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor W. Tudor Owen as Chairman of the Committee for 2012/13.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Peter Read as Vice-chairman of the Committee for 2012/13.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Elfed Williams declared a personal interest in relation to the garage of G & H Car & Commercial, Caernarfon, since he knew the owner.

Councillor Llywarch Bowen Jones declared a personal interest in relation to Gwalia Garage, Caeathro as his relative worked there.

Members were of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and they participated fully in the discussion on the item.

4. AMENDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTING GARAGES TO UNDERTAKE TAXI VEHICLE TESTS

Submitted – the report of the Head of Regulatory Department on amending the arrangement for appointing garages to undertake taxi vehicle tests.

The Licensing Manager reported that the Council licensed approximately 217 hackney vehicles and 186 private hire vehicles throughout the county. In order to conform to the licensing conditions it was a requirement for every vehicle to have two mechanical tests annually, namely:

- a) Standard MOT – the vehicle owner could choose any garage which was approved to carry out the test.
- b) Second Test – currently, the second test would be undertaken in a competent garage of the Council's choice with one garage appointed in each of the three areas.

It was noted that these requirements had been incorporated into the licensing conditions and had been adopted in the Council's taxi vehicles licensing policy.

Also, the requirements were based on the guidelines provided by the Department of Transport's best practice guidance.

Currently, three garages which complied with the relevant requirements had been authorised to undertake MOT tests and the second mechanical test which was a requirement for taxi vehicles. The Council's own garage had been undertaking the tests for vehicles in the Meirionnydd area. The arrangement for selecting and appointing competent garages was reviewed every three years in accordance with the decision of this committee. It was noted that officers of the licensing unit were currently administering the process of making appointments as and when the vehicles required a test, with the garage responsible for undertaking the required tests and sending the results of the tests to the licensing unit. The owner of the vehicle paid for the cost of the test directly to the garage.

The process of reviewing the current arrangements was commenced recently by advertising in the press for expressions of interest from garages in the areas of Arfon and Dwyfor. The advertisement was not extended to the Meirionnydd area at the time because the council's own garage continued to provide the service of testing vehicles. Responses had been received from 14 garages in the Arfon and Dwyfor areas expressing an interest, namely:

- LAS Landrovers, Llandygai
- Elias Garage, Bangor
- Gwalia Garage, Caeathro
- Garej Arwyn, Penygroes
- Povey's Garage, Penygroes
- Modurdy B&K Williams, Caernarfon
- Modurdy Dolydd, Groeslon
- Modurdy Ffrydlas, Bethesda
- G&H Car & Commercial, Caernarfon
- Peblig Tyre & Exhaust, Caernarfon
- Hardy's, Pwllheli
- Auto Mech Services, Criccieth
- A&E Motors, Porthmadog
- Bridge Garage, Pwllheli

It was confirmed that every one of the garages which had made contact could provide what was relevant to the vehicle tests at a reasonable price.

In terms of the options for reviewing the current arrangements, it was suggested in the Department of Transport's Best Practice Guidance that more than one competent garage should be authorised in such a large geographical area as Gwynedd. Since as many as 14 garages had expressed an interest, it would be necessary to consider the way forward and details were provided on the points that were to be considered.

RESOLVED to authorise 14 competent garages which had expressed an interest to undertake mechanical tests on hackney and private hire vehicles and to advertise for expressions of interest in the same way amongst garages in the Meirionnydd area.

The meeting commenced at 10:25 and concluded at 10.45am.