

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

22 MAY 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report prepared by Neil Harris

- 1. DRESS CODE FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS**
- 1.1 Issue for Decision
- 1.1.1 To consider the responses to Consultation on the proposal for the introduction of a Voluntary Dress Code for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers.
- 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Democratic Services
- 1.2.1 That the Voluntary Dress Code as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be introduced and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers be asked to conform to the Code from 1 June 2013.
- 1.2.2 That after introduction the compliance with the Code is monitored by the Licensing staff and that a report be submitted to the Committee in twelve months time indicating the impact of the introduction of the Code on the standard of dress for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers within the Borough.
- 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation
- 1.3.1 At their meeting on 24 January 2013 Members agreed to consult with the Hackney Carriage Association, the representatives of the Private Hire Operators and individual drivers about the introduction of a Voluntary Dress Code on the basis of the document attached as an Appendix to this report. It was felt that it was appropriate to take this step as some concerns had been expressed regarding the current standard of dress of some drivers which was felt to be inappropriate when on occasion some of the drivers were attired in unsuitable T-shirts, shorts and footwear. This was considered to

be unacceptable particularly as these drivers are often the first point of contact for people coming into Maidstone.

- 1.3.2 The Consultation was undertaken by letter and were given six weeks to respond. Five responses were received from the drivers one of which was hackney carriage driver with the others being private hire drivers with one of them also being an owner and operator. Three were generally supportive of the proposal whilst two were more negative in nature and the following points were made.
- That the code did not go far enough.
 - That drivers, whilst not having to wear suits, should be wearing trousers / skirts and a Polo shirt/ shirt, (not necessarily a tie), or blouse.
 - No account was taken in respect of dress which was worn on religious or cultural grounds.
 - Two comments that the code was a waste of time and resources would be better spent on enforcement.
- 1.3.3 The comment in respect of dress for religious or culture reasons can be accommodated within the proposed scheme. The cost of introducing and maintaining this code is negligible and certainly would not fund an Enforcement Officer or any enforcement action.
- 1.3.4 There was only a small response as indicated above with a majority expressing positive responses to the introduction of a Voluntary Dress Code. Therefore it is recommended that this Code is introduced.
- 1.3.5 Should it be introduced all existing drivers will be informed of the Voluntary Dress Code and the commencement date and any new driver applicants will also be informed of the Code upon their application.
- 1.3.6 It is recommended that the introduction of the Code is monitored by the Licensing staff and a report be submitted to the Committee in twelve months time indicating the impact of the introduction of the Code on the standard of dress for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers within the Borough.
- 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.4.1 It could be decided not to proceed with any action in this matter, which would do nothing to improve the current standards of dress by some drivers which have been a cause of concern.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Introducing a dress code to ensure a consistent standard supports the Council's objective of Corporate and Customer Excellence of a service provided in the Borough.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no significant risk management issues arising from this report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

1.8.2 Appendix 1 – Voluntary Dress Code.

1.8.3 Background Documents

1.8.4 None.