LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 9 APRIL 2013

A meeting of the Licensing and Safety Committee will be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 9 April 2013 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rugby.

Andrew Gabbitas
Executive Director

AGENDA

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes.

To confirm the minutes of the –

(a) Licensing and Safety Committee meeting held on 29 January 2013; and

(b) Licensing and Safety Sub Committee (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing) held on 23 January 2013;

(c) Licensing Sub Committee (Alcohol and Regulated Entertainment) held on 9 August 2012.

2. Apologies.

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest.

To receive declarations of –

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.
Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

4. Update on Deregulation – to receive a verbal report from the Public Health and Licensing Team Leader.


PART 2 – EXEMPT INFORMATION

There is no business involving exempt information to be transacted.

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed here via the website.

The Reports of Officers (Ref. LS 2012/13-04) are attached.

Membership of the Committee: Councillors Mrs Parker (Chairman), Allen, Mrs Avis, H Avis, Birkett, Mrs Bragg, Dodd, G Francis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Hazelton, Lowe, Mrs Roodhouse, Srivastava and Mrs Watson.

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn.Ashmore, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (01788 533523 or e-mail linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer named above.
AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Meeting
Licensing and Safety Committee

Date of Meeting
9 April 2013

Report Title
Review of Taxi Licensing Policy - CCTV in licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles

Portfolio
Sustainable Environment

Ward Relevance
All

Prior Consultation
The matter has been discussed with representatives of the local Taxi Trade (RHODA) at recent Taxi Forum meetings.

Contact Officer
Ian Rushton, Licensing officer. Ext 3894.

Report Subject to Call-in
N

Report En-Bloc
N

Forward Plan
N

Corporate Priorities
Enable our residents, visitors and enterprises to enjoy, achieve and prosper.

Statutory/Policy Background
The licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles is regulated by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. The Council’s Taxi Licensing Policy (2009) supports the use of CCTV cameras subject to compliance with data protection legislation (and other legislation as appropriate) although it is not compulsory for CCTV to be installed in hackney carriage or private hire vehicles.

Summary
Representatives of the taxi trade (RHODA) have requested that consideration be given to making the installation of suitable CCTV cameras compulsory for all licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. Officers have looked into the issue and have drafted a CCTV specification for consultation with the trade and other interested parties.
The specification will continue to be updated by Officers, prior to going out to consultation. A further report will then be brought back to this Committee in due course.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report. However, if at a later date the Committee decides that the installation of CCTV cameras should be made compulsory for all licensed vehicles, then there will be a financial implication for vehicle owners. The cost of CCTV equipment varies from system to system and Officers will obtain details of costs from various suppliers for inclusion in the further report to be brought back to this Committee in due course.

The cost of installing a CCTV system, to the specification required is likely to be £500 - £1000.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The Home Office have a current Statutory Consultation over the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. This is under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The Government want to further regulate the use of CCTV in public places and ensure there are sufficient safeguards on data protection. This may have an impact on CCTV in taxis and officers will consider it during the consultation.

Any implications from the Code of Practice and Government Policy, will be detailed in the detailed report to Committee, following consultation.

The report seeks Members’ approval to launch a consultation exercise on a change in taxi licensing policy to require the installation of CCTV cameras in licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and a further detailed report will be brought back to the Committee in due course.

**Equality and Diversity**

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**Options**

1. Committee agree to consider that the Council taxi licensing policy should be changed, to require all licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to have CCTV installed, which conforms to the Council specification.
Committee agree to officers consulting the taxi trade about the proposal and to bring back a report at the end of the consultation period on their views and detailed costs of installing a CCTV system to the specification required by the Council.

2. Committee decides to retain the existing policy, which leaves the decision about installation of any CCTV in a licensed hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, to the proprietor. This would also include the specification of the system.

**Recommendations**

The Committee:

1. Consider the report and the draft CCTV specification which Officers will continue to work on;

2. Approve the launch of a consultation exercise with the trade and other interested parties on the issue of CCTV cameras in licensed vehicles once the final draft CCTV specification is in place; and

3. Request that a further report be brought back to the Committee in due course after the consultation exercise.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

To provide the trade and other interested parties with an opportunity to consider the CCTV issue in detail and give their views, and for Officers to obtain further information including costs.
Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Consider the report and the draft CCTV specification;

2. Approve a consultation exercise with the trade and other interested parties on the issue of CCTV cameras in licensed vehicles once the final draft CCTV specification is in place; and

3. Assess whether a change of policy and licence conditions on CCTV is required after the consultation exercise when a further detailed report will be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

1. BACKGROUND

Representatives of the licensed taxi trade (RHODA) have requested that the Council give consideration to making the installation of suitable CCTV cameras compulsory for all licensed vehicles. Their reasons for this are to help deter crime and assist in the investigation of offences.

The Council’s current Licensing Policy (2009) reflects the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance in that the Policy supports the use of CCTV cameras in vehicles, although it is not currently compulsory for CCTV to be installed in vehicles.

The Policy (Section 5.6) states:

‘Security & Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

The DfT Best Practice Guidance recommends licensing authorities look sympathetically on the installation of security measures, such as a screen between driver and passengers or CCTV systems as a means of providing some protection for vehicle drivers.

The Council will not require enhanced security or CCTV measures in vehicles as it is considered that they are best left to the judgment of the owners and drivers themselves. The hackney carriage and private hire vehicle trades are, however, encouraged to build good links with the local police force, including participation in any Community Safety Partnership Scheme.
If CCTV facilities are installed in a licensed vehicle, the proprietor will be responsible for ensuring the system conforms to the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation, and displays the necessary informative notice for passengers.

Police officers have statutory powers to seize and view CCTV footage in connection with the detection and prevention of crime.

These powers will be affected by Home Office Surveillance Camera code of practice, Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This will introduce safeguards over the use of CCTV, and who can access data from it. This will affect police officers who want access to this CCTV data but also Council Licensing officers, who may want access to investigate specific incidents, involving taxis.

2. DRAFT CCTV SPECIFICATION

Officers have carried out some research into the use of CCTV cameras in licensed vehicles and believe that a CCTV specification should be produced. A draft specification has been produced (see Appendix 1) for discussion and consultation purposes.

CCTV must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 which regulates the processing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information. Recorded images must be securely stored on a system. CCTV in licensed vehicles must also comply with data protection legislation which includes the requirement for a notice to be displayed inside the vehicle notifying passengers of the CCTV.

The use of audio recording (as part of a CCTV system) in licensed vehicles is generally not likely to be permissible. This follows a recent case involving Southampton City Council Licensing Authority who had adopted a policy requiring all taxis and private hire vehicles to install CCTV audio recording equipment. This policy followed a number of serious violent and sexual offences taking place in or around taxis and was a bid to protect vulnerable users of taxis. The Information Commissioner issued an enforcement notice in July 2012 to Southampton City Council under Section 40 of the Data Protection Act stating that the policy (in respect of requiring continuous audio-recording) involved a breach of data protection. The Council was therefore told to refrain from recording ‘any such personal data’. The Council appealed this matter to the First-Tier Tribunal (Information Rights) who heard the case on 30 and 31 January 2013. This was the first ever surveillance case under the Data Protection Act and the Tribunal ruled against the Council saying that audio recording was not appropriate. However, officers will continue to monitor developments and propose an audio recording condition in case law permits it (e.g. a condition requiring the data recording devices to have an audio recording facility).

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Representatives of RHODA have commented that it should be made compulsory for all licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to be fitted with a suitable CCTV system. This is a matter for the Committee to determine in due course and the consultation exercise will provide useful information on the merits of adopting such a policy.
All drivers and proprietors will be consulted on the CCTV issue, together with any other interested parties including the Police. The specification is a ‘live’ document and it may be updated further by Officers prior to going out to consultation. The consultation exercise will provide the licensed trade with an opportunity to make their views known and will ensure that the whole process is fair and transparent. After the consultation exercise a further detailed report will be brought back to this Committee for further consideration and to determine whether any changes are required to the policy and licence conditions.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places the Council under a duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. Whilst CCTV can, of course, assist in the prevention of crime and disorder and can be a useful tool when investigating offences, the issue of making CCTV compulsory in licensed vehicles must be carefully considered and must be proportionate.

The Home Office have a current consultation over the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The Government want to introduce more safeguards in the use of CCTV. A point is their consultation document is that ‘the public must have confidence that surveillance is appropriate and proportionate’. There must also be appropriate privacy safeguards about data protection.

Officers believe that there are currently only a small number of existing licensed vehicles which have CCTV installed. It is proposed that the consultation exercise will ask vehicle owners and drivers to let us know if they have CCTV installed in their vehicle.

Officers consider that a policy on CCTV is also required to regulate the use of CCTV. Currently there are no restrictions in the licence conditions. Systems vary and include systems that allow easy access to recorded data. There is a risk that images taken in a licensed hackney or private hire vehicle may be misused by drivers or operators.

One of the key issues in respect of installing a suitable CCTV system is the cost, especially in today’s current economic climate. The cost of a CCTV system varies significantly subject to the type, quality and memory storage. Officers are aware of several systems on the market with prices ranging between around £250 - £1000. Officers will make further enquiries with various suppliers and manufacturers of CCTV systems and will include detailed costs as part of the report to be brought back to the Committee after the consultation exercise.

Members are asked to note the report and approve the recommendations as above.
Name of Meeting: Licensing and Safety Committee

Date of Meeting: 9 April 2013

Subject Matter: Review of Taxi Licensing Policy - CCTV in licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

**Originating Department:** Environmental Services

1. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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<td>Recent CCTV case (Southampton City Council)</td>
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(*Delete if not applicable)

1. Meet the current Information Commissioner Data protection requirements at the time of installation.

2. Capable of date, time and vehicle identification test information.

3. Capable of capturing images during daylight and darkness of sufficient quality to enable the identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and be of such a quality that can be used for prosecution purposes where necessary.

4. The recording must be event activated (for example door or ignition) and continue to record 30 minutes after the ignition is switched off.

5. Capable of recording and storing images for a minimum of 28 days.

6. A panic button which will then save all recording for a minimum of 10 minutes before activation in a separate part of the hard drive.

7. Have the integrity to prevent images being reviewed, removed and/or downloaded except by a system administrator and/or an Authorised Council or Police Officer.

8. The system must be digitally encrypted.

9. Ensure that the hard disk or data card is not accessible to the driver or any other person travelling in the vehicle.

10. The data unit must be securely fixed and stored separately from the camera(s) and out of view of any person travelling in the vehicle.

11. All equipment must not present any risk to any person travelling in the vehicle and as far as possible cannot be tampered or damaged by any person travelling in the vehicle.

12. All equipment installed in the vehicle must be capable of withstanding and functioning if the vehicle stops suddenly or there is any impact.

13. The equipment must be marked as complying with European Industry Standards.

14. The camera(s) must be capable of recording all passengers travelling in the vehicle, including the driver. For vehicles other than a saloon car this may require more than 1 camera.

15. All images must be in a format that is easily useable by Police and the Court system (DVD format recommended).

16. The system must be fitted by an approved installer, specified by the manufacturer, and serviced and maintained as specified by the manufacturer.

17. The system must be capable of recording audio if required (NOTE: current case law restricts use of audio recording but audio recording may be required if the legislation changes).
**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

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<td><strong>Contact Officer</strong></td>
<td>Mr J Collins, Team Leader, Public Health &amp; Licensing Ext 3667</td>
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**Statutory/Policy Background**

Need to comply with the requirement for Hackney Carriage Vehicles to have a tariff meter installed in accordance with Section 47(1) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Council’s Taxi Licensing Policy 2009.

**Summary**

The current Taxi Licensing Policy 2009 is currently under review. Following complaints of the overcharging of passengers and representations made from the trade through RHODA, officers are considering amending the policy to impose a requirement that all Hackney Carriages are fitted with a fully controlled calendar fare meter which prevents the tariff setting being manually adjusted to reflect a higher charge.
It is Council policy that all Hackney Carriage Vehicles have installed and use a fare meter (tariff), and this is a condition of the current Taxi Licensing Policy (see Appendix 1 to this report).

Members are requested to consider whether the policy should be amended to stipulate that Hackney Carriage fare meters are fully calendar controlled and tamper-proof to safeguard the public being overcharged by unscrupulous drivers who may enter a higher tariff rate to inflate the cost of the journey.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report. Hackney Carriage Proprietors will incur a small expenditure in having the fare (tariff) meters adapted. It is anticipated that this will be in the region of £15 per vehicle.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Need to comply with the requirement imposed by the Council for all Hackney Carriage Vehicles to install and use a fare (tariff) meter under powers conferred by Section 47(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

**Recommendation**

Consideration be given whether to recommend to Cabinet that the Taxi Licensing Policy be amended to impose a condition that all Hackney Vehicles, both new and existing vehicles, are installed with a fully calendar controlled and tamper-proof fare meter.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

Officers have been advised by representatives of the taxi trade that passengers are being overcharged by some unscrupulous drivers who alter the rate on the fare meter to charge a higher tariff and that this is damaging public confidence in the trade.
Agenda No 6
Licensing and Safety Committee – 9 April 2013

Review of Taxi Licensing Policy - Requirement to install full Calendar Controlled Fare Meters in Hackney Carriage Vehicles

Private Report of the Head of Environmental Services

Recommendation
Consideration be given whether to recommend to Cabinet that the Taxi Licensing Policy be amended to impose a condition that all Hackney Vehicles, both new and existing vehicles, are installed with a fully calendar controlled and tamper-proof fare meter.

1. BACKGROUND

Under a power conferred by Section 47(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council imposes a requirement that fare (tariff) meters are installed in all Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed by this Authority. This is condition number 17 of Appendix “A” ‘Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles April 2009’ (Appendix 1). The requirement to install a fare meter is not a statutory requirement and Licensing Authorities use the power to impose conditions upon Hackney Vehicle Licences conferred by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The requirement to install a fare meter pre-dates the Licensing Policy 2009 and has been a requirement for many years. The current condition requires that the fare should be clearly legible on the face of the machinery and the meter fixed to the vehicle with seals or other appliances making it impractical for the meter to be tampered with except by damaging, breaking or displacing the seals. However the current meters enable the driver to set the tariff rate manually. This should be at rate 1 for journeys from 6:00am to 6:00pm, starting at £2.30 but goes up to rate 2 thereafter when the tariff begins at £2.80 (an extra 50pence). There are different rates for Bank Holidays.

2. POINTS TO CONSIDER

Complaints have been received for some months from representatives of the taxi trade through RHODA, at regular taxi forum meetings with Council officers. They have claimed that passengers have complained to them, that other drivers are overcharging passengers for journeys. This is by various methods such as taking a longer route, or by manually changing the tariff setting on the fare meters to reflect a higher starting rate. A copy of an email from Grev Mills, Secretary of RHODA dated 1 October 2012 and concerning this practice is attached (Appendix 2).
Whilst the trade have received complaints from passengers about other drivers overcharging, passengers have not complained to the Council. This is despite the trade being asked to urge passengers to complain directly to the Council about this, so that allegations can be investigated. This could be due to a lack of knowledge amongst the public as to how rates are set, despite the requirement for the list of fares to be displayed within the Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

Officers have been made aware of a type of fare meter which is entirely calendar controlled. The tariffs are entered into the meter by the supplier and installer and cannot be manually overridden by the driver. These calendar fare meters take account of all Bank Holidays and the time of day and will automatically set the fare accordingly to the Licensing Authority’s tariff scheme. The fare meters are sealed units making it simple to spot if they have been tampered with. One of these fare meters is the MR500 View, manufactured by Cygnus In-Vehicle Electronics. This has been demonstrated to officers by a company who installs and tests these meters. There are other similar calendar fare meters supplied by other companies. Officers are advised that, whilst most new fare meters will cost about £250.00, existing meters can be adapted for about £15.00. Officers have been advised that it is only very old fare meters, i.e. those manufactured more than 20 years ago which cannot be adapted. A review of the age of the vehicles and fare meters fitted in the current fleet, indicate that all existing fare meters can be modified.

3. OFFICERS’ VIEWS

Officers have consulted all the current owners of Hackney Carriage Vehicles about the proposed change by way of a letter dated 21 September 2012 and asking owners for their views (Appendix 3). One reply from a proprietor has been received objecting to the proposal considering it to be a shadow on his integrity (Appendix 4). No other objections have been received. Officers are mindful of the fact that this proposal will result in some small expense to the trade and some inconvenience but recognise that this will alleviate some of the potential for possible overcharging and thus may improve public confidence. With deregulation in April this is an appropriate time to consider the fare meter requirements for new hackney carriage vehicles, which will be licensed. There are some 56 Hackney Vehicles currently licensed and the fare meters in these vehicles will need to be modified within a reasonable period.

Officers would recommend that this is between 3-6 months of the new requirement being introduced.
Name of Meeting: Licensing and Safety Committee

Date of Meeting: 9 April 2013

Subject Matter: Review of Taxi Licensing Policy - Requirement to install fully Calendar Controlled Fare Meters in Hackney Carriage Vehicles

Originating Department: Environmental Services

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Vehicle Conditions

10. The licence plate issued with this licence shall be displayed at all times on the outside of, and at the rear of the vehicle to which it relates (purpose-built vehicles – central position saloon vehicle right side of bumper).

11. There shall not be a greater number of passengers carried in the vehicle than the number of persons specified in the licence.

12. The vehicle must have affixed to it a roof sign of a type approved by the Head of Environmental Services. The sign must show the word “TAXI” at the front and be internally illuminated during the hours of darkness unless on hire.

13. There shall be no form of advertisement affixed to the exterior or interior of a hackney carriage without prior consent of the Head of Environmental Services.

14. A hackney carriage vehicle must:
   (a) be a car fitted with four road wheels and at least four doors allowing suitable access and egress to all passengers
   (b) be right hand drive
   (c) be of sufficient seating capacity to carry not less than four nor more than eight passengers in comfort in addition to the luggage of the passengers and the driver (The seating capacity to be determined in accordance with Reg. 42 of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations, 1871)
   (d) be in a satisfactory, safe, clean, well maintained and comfortable condition for the carriage of passengers
   (e) have in force during the currency of the licence in relation to the use of the vehicle for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward an insurance policy complying with the provision of Part IV of the Road Traffic Act 1972.
   (f) A Multi-purpose Vehicle must also comply with the conditions set out in Appendix B of this policy.

15. The vehicle will be white in colour with a three-row black and white chequered strip having 1 inch squares along each side immediately below the windows giving a 3 inch width.

16. Saloon and Multi-Purpose vehicles shall not be more than five years old when first licensed. London type taxis shall not be more than ten years old when first licensed. Saloon type vehicles and Multi-Purpose Vehicles that are licensed for the first time after June 2009 will not be licensed after 8 years of age unless they are in exceptionally good condition. Purpose built Hackneys that are licensed for the first time after June 2009 will not be licensed after 15 years of age unless they are in exceptionally good condition.

17. A fare-meter is to be fitted to the vehicle. When the machinery of the fare-meter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the fare-meter in figures clearly legible and free from ambiguity the appropriate fare. The word “fare” shall be printed on the face of the fare-meter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon. The fare-meter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof may be at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the vehicle, and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring. The fare-meter and all the fittings thereof shall be so fixed to the vehicle with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances. Should the meter become defective, it may be repaired providing the Council is notified on the first working day afterwards and immediate arrangements are made with the Council for the meter to be tested on the measured mile.

18. The proprietor shall ensure that a copy of the current fare table supplied by the Council from time to time is exhibited inside the carriage at all times in the location provided by the manufacturers of the vehicle or in accordance with the reasonable instructions of
Joe Collins

From: Grev Mills
Sent: 01 October 2012 10:14
To: Joe Collins
Cc: David Burrows; Taxi C MARK BRADSHAW
Subject: Overcharging

Joe,
As you are aware we have mentioned over several months that we are getting reports of overcharging by a few drivers, the reasons for this are many and varied but lack of work is a key element which has to be noted. That having been said this issue weighs heavily with operational issues, customer concerns. To maintain their trust in the trade we have to address this in with what ever manner we can.
We believe that a good step in that direction would be to have calendar meters fitted. The benefit of these is that the tariffs that can be charged are pre-set within the meter and as such a driver cannot set a higher rate than shown on the tariff card. This means for example a driver cannot apply rate 4 (double normal rate) at will but only when specified on the tariff card and set in the meter.
Whilst I accept that this will not stamp this out completely as some will always want to beat the system it should have an impact enough to make the offenders (only a few, the majority of driver are good honest citizens) of the practice think on and maybe supported with a very strong letter advising of the very server action that will be taken against anyone involved in overcharging.
This we believe would significantly reduce this particular offence.
Regards
Grev
Secretary RHODA
Dear Sir,

Possible Introduction of Calendar Taxi Meters in Hackney Carriages, in the Rugby Borough Council area.

There was a recent meeting between Council Licensing officers, Representatives of the local taxi owners and drivers association (RHODA) and the Chair of the Licensing and Safety Committee, to discuss taxi and private hire issues.

RHODA committee members advised the Council, that there was a significant problem in Rugby, with over charging of customers, by hackney carriage drivers. They have requested that the Council introduce a requirement for hackney carriage proprietors, to install calendar taxi meters in their vehicles, or have the existing taxi meter modified, so the rates cannot be altered by the driver.

I have contacted a number of taxi meter suppliers, to enquire about calendar meters. These have an integral date and time, so the rates are pre-set and cannot be altered by the driver.

The companies did say that the most recent taxi meters with a date and clock, can be modified, by fitting a new microchip. Examples of full clock calendar taxi meters are Taxitronic TX30, Digitax F2 RTC, Digitax F1, Autocab TM1000 and the A1 Mirror meter. These meters only need a change of the tariff to make them full calendar controlled. This could be done by changing the micro chip, and costs £15.

Unfortunately, the older taxi meters would have to be replaced by the new calendar meters.

Examples of meters which cannot be modified are Taxitronic TX34, Digitax F2 and Digitax 806 models.

I have been advised that a new calendar taxi meter would cost approximately £250, per vehicle, including installation.

If the Council insist that taxi meters are changed or modified, this would require a change in the Council Taxi Licensing Policy. I have been asked to contact all hackney carriage proprietors, to ask for your views, before a report is taken to Licensing and Safety Committee.

Cont.
This could possibly be on the agenda for the Committee meeting on the 6th November 2012, as RHODA have advised the Council licensing officers and Committee chairman, that this is an urgent matter and cannot wait until the entire Policy is reviewed and sent out for full consultation.

The report submission for this specific committee meeting, is dependant on the Council receiving all the information from the meter suppliers, and feedback from hackney carriage proprietors. If there was a delay, the report would have to go to a subsequent Committee meeting.

Any decision would be dependant on the views of the taxi trade and the Committee would also have to decide on any implementation date, if the decision was to request that calendar taxi meters had to be fitted in all hackney carriages.

It is in your interest to send your comments to the Council, especially if they differ from the views held by RHODA.
If we do not receive comments from the trade, this will be reported to the Committee. They make take the view that the lack of comments, indicates acceptance of the proposal by the trade.

Please can you send any comments to me at the Council, in writing by letter or by email to joe.collins@ruby.gov.uk. Or licensing@ruby.gov.uk
These comments need to be sent as soon as possible and by the 11th October 2012.

If you have any queries, please contact me on 01788 533667, or speak to Debbie Ritchie or Ian Rushton, Licensing officers, on 01788 533894.

If the taxi meter fitted in your hackney carriage is not one of the models mentioned, I would suggest that you contact your meter supplier, to find out if it can be modified or not. If it is an old model, it is unlikely that it can be, so would have to be replaced.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J. Collins.
Team Leader, Public Health and Licensing.
Mr J Collins,

Thank you for your letter dated 21st September 2012 regarding the possible introduction of calendar taxi meters in hackney carriages in rugby. If there is a significant problem in rugby with over charging of customers by hackney carriage drivers would the answer not be to follow up any complaints from the public to find the hackney carriage drivers that are committing the offence? The customers could obtain official receipts with the taxi firm name and phone number and follow it up accordingly with the council.

I look on this suggestion by Rugby Borough Council to install tamper proof calendar meters as a shadow on my integrity. If Rugby Borough Council check my file on the criminal record bureau it will show no convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings, speeding or parking offences. I find this situation quite insulting that I could be asked to make changes to replace a perfectly operating meter, which will incur more expense to my ever decreasing business finances.

I have a sign in my taxi telling the customers I do not over charge and explain that the tariff number one is displayed on the meter during the day.

I have been a taxi proprietor in rugby for fifteen years and have never received a complaint from any of my customers or Rugby Borough Council.

One of the biggest problems in Rugby is that too many outsiders are coming to work in the town that have not got the knowledge of the areas needed to do the job.

I sincerely hope this suggestion of calendar taxi meters in Rugby taxis will not proceed, and other methods to seek a satisfactory conclusion can be found.

Yours Faithfully

John Cole