

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE
27 MARCH 2012**

**JOINT ENFORCEMENT EXERCISE - EXETER CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER
AGENCIES ON LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE
VEHICLES**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To bring to the Committees attention the feedback from the enforcement exercise carried out on the 17 February 2012.
- 1.2 On the night of 17 February officers of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, VOSA, Borders Agency HMRC, Customs and Excise, Dept. for Woks and pensions, investigators from Exeter City Council's treasury services and the Council's licensing office carried out checks on vehicles and drivers working in the City to establish the level of compliance with the statutory obligations to ensure the vehicle is well maintained, to ensure the drivers are properly licensed and that those that are working under the provisions of the licence are not also claiming from the state and complying with standard conditions attached to vehicle and driver licenses.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Licensing Office routinely carry out checks with other agencies to ensure the travelling public are not compromised by either illegal drivers or vehicles that are unfit for the carriage of the public.
- 2.2 The outcome of the exercise which commenced at 19:00 and completed at a little after midnight is set out in the appendix attached.

3. OTHER SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- 3.1 As well as the information contained in the attachment relating primarily to the vehicles, other agencies engaged with licence holders on the night and indications are that a number of drivers are suspected of claiming benefits whilst driving licensed vehicles but details of individuals are not available as further action may be taken by those enforcement agencies.
- 3.2 It was noted on the night that only a small number of Hackney carriages were identified on the circuit. No explanation was available until the following Monday when an e-mail was received from a Hackney Carriage driver, the content of which read :
- 3.3 *Hello and good morning,
It was a good idea to carry out vehicle / driver checks etc on Friday last week, as you will be able to see by your records that only a small amount of hackney taxis were checked, the reason being that word spread around of the checks, so a lot of the vehicle / drivers went home to avoid the checks, i can only presume they have something to hide, i hope this is the first step on checking the vehicle / drivers and the ones who avoided the checks get checked, it would make more sense to call each and every hackney carriage into the council for the checks, i look forward to this reply*

- 3.4 Joint Enforcement exercises are routinely carried out but frequency is limited because of the resource implications for so many agencies. It may be of benefit to the Licensing Committee for members to accompany officers when future multi-agency enforcement checks are carried out so that they can obtain an insight into the enforcement role of Licensing Officers.
- 3.5 However, because of the sensitive and intense nature of these night time activities, no more than two members of the Licensing Committee should be in attendance on any one occasion.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Licensing Committee note the content of the report.

Assistant Director Environment

ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None