

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE

held on 4 October 2022

Present:

Cllr J R Sanderson (Chairman)
Cllr A Caulfield Cllr L M N Morales
Cllr G W Elson Cllr J P Morley
Cllr D M C Jordan

Absent: Councillors C S Kemp, M Ali, S Dorsett and T G Spenser

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8 March and 23 May 2022 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Dorsett, C Kemp and T Spenser.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

5. REVIEW OF TAXI FARES LIC22-004

Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer, introduced the report before the Committee which proposed to introduce a more robust method of calculating fares for Hackney Carriages on the same basis used by Guildford Borough Council, noting that it had been judicially reviewed with success and implemented following extensive consultation. The proposal would provide an easier, clearer and fairer method of setting maximum fares for Hackney Carriages.

It was stated that Woking had updated its taxi fares previously around 2013 and so a review would be beneficial, particularly in light of recent rises to fuel costs, insurance costs, and the current cost of living crisis. Should the recommendations be approved, officers would update the calculations and carry out a full consultation with the drivers and the

general public. Taking into account any objections or valid representations, officers would subsequently consult with the Portfolio Holder and amend the fares under delegated authority.

Following questions by Members of the Committee, it was noted that whilst the figures in the calculation could drop it was likely they would increase; the basis of the calculation was the 2014 data from the AA which would be reviewed once more recent relevant data became available; a fuel cost of 45 pence per mile had been included; a preliminary informal consultation had been undertaken with the trade which had received a very low number of responses that were all supportive; and extras such as Heathrow drop-off fee, insurance and card payment costs would be included in the consultation. Matthew Cobb agreed to discuss the calculation behind the running cost for diesel cars with Councillor Jordan outside the meeting.

The Committee was advised that the consultation would begin shortly after the meeting of the Executive and also would entail an advert in a local newspaper alongside promotion on the Council's website. The fare chart for display in the Hackney Carriage vehicles would be of an A4 size and officers would ensure it was legible for the travelling public.

Members were supportive of the proposals and felt that it would be beneficial to bring the outcome of the annual review of the calculation undertaken by officers as a report to the Licensing Committee.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

- That (i) the proposed method of working out the Hackney Carriage Fares be formally adopted;**
- (ii) delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Licensing Portfolio Holder to act on behalf of the Council in agreeing to any future changes to Hackney Carriage Fares;**
- (iii) it be agreed that the fares are to be reassessed as a matter of priority by the Licensing Authority to ensure that the maximum fares the Hackney Carriage trade can charge are not being restricted at a time of record inflation and rising fuel costs, by way of a required statutory consultation with the outcomes considered by the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Licensing Portfolio Holder; and**
- (iv) an annual review of the calculation be reported to the Licensing Committee.**

6. APPOINTMENTS TO LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEES LIC22-005

Gareth John, Head of Legal Services, introduced a report which proposed adjustments to the membership of Licensing Sub-Committees A and B during the current Municipal Year following an administrative oversight.

RESOLVED That

- (i) Councillor Morales be appointed to Licensing Sub-Committee A in place of Councillor Graves for 2022/23; and
- (ii) Councillor Elson be appointed to Licensing Sub-Committee B in place of Councillor Whitehand for 2022/23.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____