

Licensing Committee – Meeting held on Monday, 10th October, 2022.

Present:- Councillors Kaur (Vice-Chair), Bains, Gill, M. Malik, Nazir, Qaseem and Sandhu

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Gahir

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Cheema, P. Bedi, S. Malik and Strutton

PART 1

16. Declarations of Interest

None received.

17. Guidance on Predetermination/ Predisposition - To Note

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on pre-determination and predisposition.

18. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 24th March 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

19. Proposed Hackney Carriage Tariff Amendment

The Licensing Officer introduced a report which set out details of the proposed hackney carriage tariff amendment.

Members were reminded that in March 2022 the Committee had approved a fare increase requested by the Slough Taxi Federation. As set out in section 65 of the 1976 Act, a 14-day consultation on the amended tariff was conducted by placing an advert of the new tariff chart in the local press. No objections or comments were received during the consultation and the new tariff came into effect on 25 April 2022.

However, following the close of the consultation, the Licensing Team received complaints about the approved tariff and requests were received from both the Slough Taxi Federation and the Slough Taxi Association as well as individual proprietors to change it. The Slough Taxi Federation and Slough Taxi Association were invited to submit a formal tariff amendment request.

It was noted that all Hackney Carriage Proprietors were consulted on their preferred tariff, with the majority indicating tariff Chart B as the preferred option. Details of comparison tariffs in neighbouring authorities within a 25 mile radius were also set out for Members information.

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With the Chair's consent, representatives from the trade addressed the meeting. The Chair of Slough Taxi Federation (STF) stated that they had made an error in the chart that was presented to the Committee at its previous meeting. The amended chart equated to an approximate 9% increase in fares which was considered necessary to mitigate the increase in fuel costs and more generally increase in cost of living expenses. It was requested that tariff chart B be approved. Members also heard submissions from the Chair of the Slough Taxi Association who requested that the tariffs remain as those agreed in March 2022.

Members raised a number of points in the ensuing discussion which included:

- Clarification was sought as to who implemented changes to the meters and it was explained that this was done via independent meter specialists and not through the Council.
- A Member asked why, if an error had been made in the chart submitted by STF, that this wasn't amended by officers. The legal representative explained that changes to published tariffs could only be made by the Committee.
- The Licensing Officer confirmed that complaints received in relation to the tariff agreed in March 2022 were from members of the trade and not the public.
- A question was asked regarding the difference in monetary terms between the tariffs presented. Members were informed that an average journey should Chart A be agreed was £6.97 and £7.17 for Chart B.

At the conclusion of the discussion Members noted that there had not been an increase in fares since 2013 and agreed that Chart B be approved for the hackney carriage tariffs.

Resolved –

- (a) That tariff Chart B as attached at Appendix C to the report be approved;
- (b) That the costs of advertising the fare charges in the local newspapers be met by Hackney Vehicle proprietors; in pursuance of the Licensing Committee resolution in January 2007 that advertising costs to be met by Hackney Vehicle proprietors.
- (c) If following the public notice relating to the new tariff any objections are received and not withdrawn the objections shall be determined by the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager in consultation with the Licensing Committee Chair, who shall determine whether or not to modify the approved new tariff chart and in the event that objections are materially significant the matter be referred back to the Committee for consideration.

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20. Date of Next Meeting - 6th February 2023

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 6th February 2023.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30pm and closed at 7.15pm)