



LICENSING COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors H Barton-Brown (Chairman), A Acott, T. Gibson, P Greig, D Jones, P May, S Mumford and B Palmer.

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Walter.

10. MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were none.

11. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 18 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

12. TAXI FARE INCREASE – NEW TARIFF OF FARES

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licensing & Community setting out details of a formal request made by the Castle Point Taxi Association WhatsApp Group (CPTA) for a permanent increase in the level of charges for journeys made by taxi.

Further to the published report, revised recommendations were circulated to the Committee which were clearer.

In response to a Member question relating to the maximum number of passengers for multi seater fares, as referenced in paragraph 3.5 of the report, officers confirmed that multi seater fares applied from 5 to a maximum of 8 passengers.

Officers emphasised, in response to a Member concern that fares in Southend and Basildon were higher than current fares in Castle Point, that the current proposal for a fare increase, which was based broadly on the Basildon tariff, was one submitted by taxi drivers.

A Member observed that two taxi operators did not support the proposed increase; their consultation responses set out in Appendix E to the report made reference to the proposed increase causing financial difficulties for passengers during the current cost of living crisis. In addition, the operators had expressed concern that the proposed increase would impact on elderly and frail passengers needing to undertake short journeys. Officers confirmed that it was not mandatory for private hire taxi operators to follow the Council's fare tariff; if they had meters in their private hire vehicles, they could remove these, if they so chose, and set their own fares. Hackney carriage vehicles, however, had to have meters in their vehicles and were obliged to follow the fare tariff set by the Council.

Cllr H Barton-Brown moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr T Gibson, that the request for a permanent increase in the level of charges made by hackney carriage be approved, and this was unanimously agreed. She moved a further Motion, seconded by Cllr P Greig, that revised recommendations 2 and 3, as circulated, be approved and this was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

- (1) That the request for a permanent increase in the level of charges made by hackney carriage be agreed.
- (2) That the proposed new fares, as set out in the report, be applied to the current tariff, subject to:
 - (a) The statutory consultation procedure being completed.
 - (b) If no representations are received within the period allowed the increase to the table of fares shall become effective on a date to be fixed by the Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licensing & Community on or after 9 April 2024.
 - (c) The detailed breakdown being agreed with the meter agents.
- (3) That the Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licensing & Community be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of Licensing Committee, to consider any representations received (which are not then withdrawn) during the consultation period and determine the appropriate response required, including the approval of amendments to the table of fares, if considered necessary, and the fixing of another date for a revised table of fares to come into effect, as necessary.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

Chair -----

Date -----