



AGENDA ITEM NO 3

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held in the Council Chamber at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday, 28 September 2022 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Cllr Julia Huffer (Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose-Smith
Cllr David Ambrose-Smith
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Simon Harries
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Alec Jones
Cllr Alan Sharp
Cllr Jo Webber (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Gareth Wilson

OFFICERS

Stewart Broome – Senior Licensing Officer
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant
Tracy Couper – Democratic Services Manager
Adeel Younis - Legal Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

Richard Lee – Fencabs
Alan Cole – Alan's Taxis

19. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

No apologies for absence were received.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Austen stated that she was a regular Taxi user but would be considering the item on review of Taxi fares with an open mind.

21. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 27 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

22. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

23. **REVIEW OF TAXI FARES - CONSULTATION RESULTS**

The Committee considered a report, X62 previously circulated, that detailed comments submitted in response to the Taxi Table of Fares Amendment Notice published on Thursday 4 August 2022.

The Senior Licensing Officer explained that this meeting had been re-arranged from 21 September due to the death of HM The Queen.

As a result of the consultation, six objections had been received, all from members of the licensed trade. A summary of the objections was contained in the report, the main aspects of which were:

- The reduction of the flag rate from 1 mile to 704 yards;
- The removal of Bank Holidays from Rate 4;
- Request for Rate 2 commencement to be moved from 9pm to 7pm;
- Failure of new rates to take account of all costs incurred by the trade;
- Request for more frequent reviews

Therefore, the Senior Licensing Officer had produced a revision to the consultation version of the Taxi Table of Fares, as set out in Table 2 at paragraph 5.2 of the report, which addressed the majority of these issues. The Senior Licensing Officer explained the implications of these, as detailed in paragraphs 5.3 (i) to (iv) of the report, and highlighted that the Table of Fares for this District still would compare favourably with neighbouring Councils. On the issue of the request for Rate 2 commencement to be moved from 9pm to 7pm, it was proposed that this could be considered as part of the next review.

The Chairman then invited Members to ask questions of the 2 representatives of the Taxi trade present. The trade representatives confirmed that Table 2 in the report represented a reasonable compromise to address the concerns of the trade. With regard to the commencement time for Rate 2, they hoped that the move from 11pm to 9pm would help to attract more drivers to work evenings, but welcomed the potential to move to 7pm as part of the next review, if this did not prove to be the case. The trade representatives commented on the difficulties currently being experienced in getting drivers to work weekends and the preference of many drivers for undertaking School runs during the day due to the guaranteed income. Members asked what the trade considered an appropriate period before the next review of fares and the trade representatives commented that 18 months to 2 years would be suitable from their perspective.

A Member queried how quickly the revised fares could be implemented by the trade and the Senior Licensing Officer stated that this could be done as soon after this meeting as the companies/drivers could change their meters.

Members emphasised that they wished to have a collaborative relationship with the licensed trade and this should include more regular reviews than there had been in the past. Having heard the views of the trade as to the frequency for such reviews and received information from the Senior Licensing Officer on the process and timescales for conducting a review, it was proposed that the next review be timetabled for 2 years time. However, the trade was reminded that

they could request a review, if there was a dramatic change in circumstances before the next programmed review.

It was resolved (unanimously):

1. That the amended Taxi Table of Fares set out in Table 2 at paragraph 5.2 of the submitted report be approved.
2. That a formal review of Taxi fares be undertaken in 2 years time.

24. **SENIOR LICENSING OFFICER'S UPDATE**

The Committee considered a verbal report that updated Members on current and emerging issues relating to Licensing both locally and nationally.

The Senior Licensing Officer reported that the Licensing Team had been undertaking an animal welfare enforcement issue, the outcome of which would be reported to a future meeting. In addition, a large Taxi Company specialising in Adult Social Care contracts had been in discussions with the Licensing Team with regard to a possible relocation of their premises to the District and again the outcome would be reported to a future meeting, if matters progressed.

25. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan. The Senior Licensing Officer reported that forthcoming agenda items included CCTV in Taxis and the annual review of Fees and Charges.

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.45am

Chairman.....

Date: