

A MEETING OF THE LICENSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 7 JUNE 2011

The Mayor (Councillor Carter CR) (ex-officio), Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P), Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Bradley (P), Carter CK (P), Mrs Cully, Edwards, Foster-Reed (P), Jacobs (P), Murphy (P), Scard (P) and Miss West (P) .

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillors Hook and Mrs Searle had been nominated to replace Councillor Edwards and Mrs Cully respectively, for this meeting.

7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of the Mayor, Councillors Edwards and Mrs Cully.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bradley declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in item 9 application for Private Hire Drivers Licence and item 10 application for Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board held on 5 April 2011 and 19 May 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

10. DEPUTATIONS

Deputations had been received on item number 6 - Review of Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff.

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

12. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE TARIFF

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager requesting consideration of an increase in the maximum level of Hackney Carriage fares chargeable and to consider which formula and tariff model should be implemented from 1 August 2011.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that all 68 Hackney Carriage Plate holders had been written to, seeking their opinions on the three models presented. The Board were advised that 22 replies had been received, 11

were in favour of proposed model 3, 6 in favour of proposed model 2 and 5 in favour of proposed model 1.

The Chairman clarified that if the Board were minded not to approve an increase, that any increase in running costs this year could not be included in any proposed increase in subsequent years.

Mr Cox was invited to address the Board. He advised that he had obtained an additional 16 responses from Hackney Carriage plate holders, all of which supported model 3.

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that the responses were from current plate holders and all supported model 3.

Mr Cox advised the Board that he acknowledged that there were differing views as to which model was acceptable. He advised that as the owner of Hardway Cabs, he would welcome model 3, as in the current economic climate it would have least impact on customers.

Mr Cox stated that it was already difficult to compete with the cheaper private hire fares and that often, on seeing the pull off fare of a Hackney Carriage, customers would exit the taxi and arrange for a private hire firm to collect them instead. He was concerned that an increase of over 4% would result in a greater loss of business for Hackney Carriage Drivers.

In answer to a Member's question Mr Cox advised that he did not anticipate a decrease in the level of customer service provided, as this would be detrimental to the taxi company.

He also advised that he did not anticipate any reduction in maintenance of vehicles as they would still be subject to existing checks already in place. He felt that plate holders would suffer a greater drop in revenue should the tariff be increased.

In answer to a further Member's question, Mr Cox advised that to reduce running costs, Hackney Carriage Drivers could alter their working hours. He also advised that, with regard to increasing fuel prices, Private Hire Cars were charging approximately 20% less for fares and were still able to operate, even with the increase in fuel prices.

Mr Cox concluded that he felt that as model 3 would only equate to a 10p increase on a fare of £7 it presented best value to customers.

Mr Elsey was invited to address the Board. He advised that he too supported the adoption of model 3. He reiterated Mr Cox's concern that trade was being lost to Private Hire firms with cheaper fares.

Mr Dampier was invited to address the Board. He advised that he had been a Hackney Carriage operator for 44 years and that it was his only source of income. He commented that the cost of motoring was increasing and that he

was struggling to cover the cost of running his taxi some weeks.

Mr Dampier stated that customers requiring transport to HMS Collingwood had remarked that Gosport tariffs were significantly cheaper than the rates charged by Fareham and felt that there should be some degree of correlation between neighbouring boroughs.

Mr Dampier advised that Private Hire fares were not always cheaper and that they would often begin a passenger's fare from their departure from the office, something that Hackney Carriages could not do if assigned a pick up.

A Member queried that, in relation to Mr Dampier's comments that the Fareham Borough taxi tariff was more expensive, the report of the Housing Services Manager showed that the Fareham Tariff was similar to that proposed in model 3.

Members recognised that there were differing opinions as to which tariff should be approved, it was recognised that only just over 50% of Hackney Carriage Plate holders had replied to the consultation and that 27 of the 38 replies favoured the adoption of model 3.

Members accepted that in these difficult financial times, it was in the interest of the taxi operator to find ways of reducing overheads and minimise any increase to customers and unanimously agreed that the adoption of model 3 was best placed to do this.

RESOLVED: That an increase in the maximum level of Hackney Carriage fares chargeable be approved and that tariff model 3, as shown in Appendix B of the report, be implemented, subject to public consultation, from 1 August 2011.

PART II

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in relation to the following items the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the reports.

Councillor Bradley declared a Personal and Prejudicial interests in items 14 and 15, left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

14. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS LICENCE

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Housing Services Manager which advised the Board of an application for the issue of a Private Hire Driver's Licence.

The report was exempt from publication as the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information by reason that it contained personal information that was not considered appropriate to be released to the public.

RESOLVED: That the application for the issue of a Private Hire Driver's Licence be refused.

15. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS LICENCE

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Housing Services Manager which advised the Board of an application for the issue of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence.

The report was exempt from publication as the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information by reason that it contained personal information that was not considered appropriate to be released to the public.

RESOLVED: That the application for the issue of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence be approved.

The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN