

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Licensing Committee held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Monday, 13th March, 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Stan Avison (Chairman)
Councillor Sandra Campbell-Wardman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Billy Brookes, Graham Cullen and Neil Jones.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Adrian Twiddy	- Principal Licensing Officer
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer and Civic Officer
Lynda Eastwood	- Democratic Services Officer

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Those present were noted. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Andrews, Adrian Benjamin, Andrew Leonard, Dr David Mangion, Sarah Parkin and Terry Taylor.

20. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to disclose any relevant interests.

No interests were disclosed.

21. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the General Licensing Committee Meeting held on 30th January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

22. ANNUAL REVIEW OF MAXIMUM HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE STRUCTURE:

An open report was submitted by the Assistant Director - Regulatory, which enabled Members to undertake a review of the maximum hackney carriage fare structure.

The Principal Licensing Officer set out the background to the Report, pages 2 to 3 refer. He informed Members that the Skegness Taxi Owners Association (STOA) was asking for amendments to be made to the fare structure and the Skegness & District Taxi Drivers Association (SDTDA) had requested that no variation be made to the fare structure at this time.

Members were referred to the submissions from STOA and SDTDA, set out in Appendices B and C of the Report, pages 11 to 13 refer.

The following comments and questions were raised:-

- A Member queried how many members were in each group of taxi drivers. The Principal Licensing Officer responded that he did not have this information but could seek this information for future reference.
- A Member agreed that there should be a review, however did not agree with the STOA proposed tariff increase, with the exception of the additional cost of 25p per litre of fuel to be changed to £1.75 from the £1.55 at present. He also commented that he didn't agree with a tariff change on Sundays as it should not be considered as a special day.
- A Member pointed out that everything had increased in price recently and did not want to penalise taxi drivers, therefore queried whether this review would be going ahead.
- A discussion ensued and Members commented that the fare structure should remain as it was for now and be reviewed in 6 months' time.

Following which, it was proposed and seconded for the maximum hackney carriage fare structure to remain at its current rate and be reviewed in 6 months' time.

Vote:

In favour - 5

RESOLVED

- That no variation be made to the maximum hackney carriage fare structure at the current time and be reviewed in six months' time.

23. DBS UPDATE SERVICE - HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVERS:

An open report was submitted by the Assistant Director - Regulatory, Safer Communities, which enabled Members to undertake a review of the hackney carriage and private hire driver licensing procedures in relation to the DBS Update Service.

The Principal Licensing Officer set out the background to the report, page 16 of the report refers.

Reference was made to paragraph 2, pages 16 and 17 of the report refer.

The Licensing team were requesting that Committee amended the licensing policy to state that drivers who did not register for the DBS

Update Service within the 30-day window be granted a six-month licence rather than the normal three-year licence. Alternatively, a three-year licence could be granted, followed by a process to chase up non-responders after a period of six months. It was hoped that by changing the process this would focus drivers to accept responsibility for registering for the update service and would reduce the number of drivers that needed to be chased up.

The following comments and questions were raised:-

- Following a query, the Principal Licensing Officer confirmed that the DBS six-month check was a requirement laid down under the Department for Transport's Minimum Licensing Standards.
- A Member commented that it was the Committee's responsibility to ensure that the drivers were checked and that Committee needed to support the proposed changes to the policy.
- A Member queried whether a three-month licence could be issued instead of a six-month licence. The Principal Licensing Officer advised that drivers were given 30 days to register on the DBS Update Service and a check was made every 6 months.

Following which, it was proposed and seconded to issue a six-month licence rather than the normal three-year licence to drivers who had failed to register their Enhanced DBS Disclosure within the required 30-day period (or any subsequent registration period set down by the DBS).

Vote:

In favour - 5

RESOLVED:

That the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing Policy be amended to indicate that drivers who had failed to register their Enhanced DBS Disclosure within the required 30-day period (or any subsequent registration period set down by the DBS) would be issued with a six-month driver licence rather than the normal three-year licence. The driver would then have to apply for licence renewal in six-month's time, pay the licence renewal fee, undergo another Enhanced DBS Disclosure (at their own cost) and ensure that they registered the new Disclosure within the required DBS registration window.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of this Committee will be confirmed at the AGM to be held on 24 May 2023.

The Meeting closed at 3.00 pm.