

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Licensing Committee held in the Council Chambers at the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Monday, 18th September, 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Sandra Campbell-Wardman (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Jones (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Richard Avison, Billy Brookes, Graham Cullen, Stephen Evans, Darren Hobson, George Horton, Andrew Leonard, Carl Macey and Terry Taylor.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Adrian Twiddy	- Principal Licensing Officer
Martha Rees	- Legal Representative
Lynda Eastwood	- Democratic Services Officer
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer and Civic Officer

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

No apologies for absence were received.

12. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

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

- Councillor Graham Cullen asked it be noted that he was a personal licence holder.
- Councillor Andrew Leonard asked it be noted that he was a personal licence holder.
- Councillor Carl Macey asked it be noted that he was a personal licence holder.

13. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the General Licensing Committee Meeting held on 26th June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

14. REVIEW OF MAXIMUM HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE STRUCTURE:

An open report was submitted by the Group Manager Public Protection, 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) and the Skegness & District Taxi Drivers Association (SDTDA) were requesting an increase in the fare structure.

Members were referred to the submissions from STOA and SDTDA, set out in Appendices B and C of the report, pages 13 to 15 refer.

The Principal Licensing Officer relayed the STOA's requests to Members as follows:

- The flag fall (the initial charge made for the hiring of the vehicle) and the fares for distance.
- The Sunday fare rate.
- The booking fee/call out charge.

The Principal Licensing Officer also relayed the SDTDA's requests to Members as follows:

- The flag fall and the fares for distance.
- The booking fee/call out charge.

A discussion ensued, and the following points were raised:

Members discussed the level of the proposed increases with regards to the flag fall and the fares for distance. It was agreed that a balance was needed between ensuring that drivers could make a living and customers were able to afford to pay the fare, highlighting the cost of living crisis. It was proposed and seconded that the Tariff 1 daytime rate be increased to £7.00.

With regard to the 50% increase on the Tariff 1 rate for Sunday working, as requested by the STOA, a Member commented that if those drivers who supported the increase failed to receive this they may stop operating on a Sunday. However, other Members considered that as a lot of businesses opened on a Sunday there was relatively no difference to working on any other day of the week and ultimately it was the individual drivers' choice. Following which, Members agreed that no change was to be made to the existing tariff.

The request for the Booking Fee/Call Out Charge to increase to £1 per mile was discussed, following which Members commented that following a 50% increase in 2022 a further 33% increase was too high. It was considered that the 75p per mile covered wear and tear to the vehicle and that this was an acceptable rate. Following which, it was agreed that the Booking Fee/Call Out Charge would remain at 75p per mile.

No further comments or questions were received.

Following which, it was

RESOLVED

That further to consideration from the General Licensing Committee, the annual review of the maximum hackney carriage fare structure be agreed as follows:

- That Tariff 1 – Daytime Rate, be increased to £7.00 at the 2-mile mark. This amendment to be advertised by statutory notice.
- That there be no change to the Sunday tariff and to remain at Tariff 1.
- That there be no change to the Booking Fee/Call Out Charge and to remain at 75p per mile.

The Principal Licensing Officer informed Members that he had received a letter from Mr Hogg of Ambassador Taxis, page 17 of the report refers requesting that Members consider an additional person tariff for larger 7/8 seater vehicles.

Further to discussion, it was

RESOLVED

That no change be made to the fare structure for larger 7/8 seater vehicles, however further information be requested from Mr Hogg with a view to Committee considering a review of this in March 2024.

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:

It was proposed and seconded that the public and press be excluded from the meeting.

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that, if they were present, there could be disclosed exempt information as defined at paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act (as Amended).

16. APPLICATION FOR PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE:

An exempt report was submitted by the Group Manager Public Protection which enabled Members to consider a private hire vehicle driver licence application.

Following which, it was

RESOLVED

That the licence application be refused.

That a further licence application should not be received until a period of 3 years had lapsed (since the February 2023 cautions).

17. HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER - RAPID RESPONSE PROCEDURE:

An Exempt report was presented regarding a review of a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licence.

Following which, it was

RESOLVED

That the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle driver licences be suspended for a minimum period of six months (after the 06 July 2023 incident).

That the licence suspension may be lifted after 6 months if the person had been well and stable and was not taking medication with side effects that would affect alertness or concentration.

That after the period of six months had lapsed the person concerned should look to provide the Council with documentary medical evidence (from the medical practitioner) that they were well and stable and not taking medication with side effects that would affect alertness or concentration.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next Meeting was confirmed as 13 November 2023.

The Meeting closed at 4.45 pm.