

Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee - 20 February 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee** held on **20 February 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr T Livings
Cllr C R Morgan

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr J E Grey

OFFICERS PRESENT

S J Clarkson	- Head of Revenue & Housing Management
J Crawford	- Transportation Manager
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

Martin Chaplin of the Rochford Hackney Carriage Drivers' Association and Derek Willsher of the Association of Circuit Company Owners in the Rochford District.

26 MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting held on 15 August 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was recognised that Members of the Sub-Committee had a personal interest to the extent that they used taxis.

28 CHARGES FOR SERVICES DELIVERED

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management on consultation with Taxi Association representatives with regard to Hackney Carriage/Private Hire fees and charges.

Members noted the background to the formulation of proposals, a key aspect being that charges to the trade should provide a cost neutral service to Council Tax-payers. It was also noted that the charges would come into effect on 1 April 2004 and that, since reported publication, the Criminal Records Bureau had advised that its charge for Criminal Records Disclosures would be set at £33.00.

RECOMMENDED to the Environmental Services Committee:-

That, there being no strong objections from to taxi trade to the proposed charges and subject to the charge for Criminal Record Disclosures being set at £33.00, the 2004/05 charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles be as set out on the Schedule appended to the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management (these having previously been agreed by Council, subject to this consultation process). (HRHM)

29 RETAIL PRICE INDEX

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management on the use of the Retail Price Index as an indicator when reviewing requests for tariff changes.

During debate on factors which can influence the tariff, Members noted that officers had been in consultation with the trade on aspects of the existing tariff and that the trade had some concerns that, in practice, the tariff set last year had not always approximated to an increase of 4% over typical one to four mile distances. The Sub-Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for the trade representatives to submit their proposals for the 2005/06 tariff by 1 May to facilitate an officer report to a future meeting.

During debate of indices available from the Office of National Statistics, it was noted that there are occasions when taxi drivers decide not to charge elderly passengers for the carrying of luggage. In this context it was observed that the taxi industry demonstrated many caring traits. It was also recognised that, practicably, it is not possible to set tariffs based on possible acts of good will.

Responding to questions, the Head of Revenue & Housing Management advised that:-

- Any indices or other information indicators used in considering the taxi tariff should be viewed as influencing factors only.
- Officers would establish whether Government policy was likely to mean that use of the RPIX would soon be ended in favour of the CPI. If there is not clear indication of when the RPIX will end, officers will produce information on both indices.
- To assist the tariff setting process officers can also provide information on the following:-
 - The percentage increase associated with pensions.
 - The percentage increase in Council Tax.
 - The percentage increase associated with wages.

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- The percentage increase associated with the insurance cover required by taxi drivers.

In debating the fact that any information gathered could help inform discussions on tariffs, it was recognised that some national indices contained built in provision for aspects such as Council Tax and fuel increases.

RECOMMENDED to the Environmental Services Committee

That officers provide statistical information on the indices/indicators identified in the above bullet points to assist the Sub-Committee when giving future consideration to the 2004/05 Hackney Carriage fare tariff. (HRHM)

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and closed at 11.06am..

Chairman

Date