

Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee 9 July 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee** held on **9 July 2003** were present:-

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)

Cllr T Livings
Cllr C R Morgan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs R Brown.

SUBSTITUTE

Cllr JE Grey

OFFICERS PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT

Anita Nelson and Martin Chaplin from the Rochford Hackney Drivers Association, and Derek Wilsher and John Charters from ACCORD.

20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 March 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T R Livings declared a personal interest by virtue of being a user of taxis.

22 HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE TARIFF

At the commencement of the Meeting, the Chairman welcomed the representatives from the taxi trade and invited them to indicate any views they had on proposals before the meeting.

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The representatives indicated that:-

- They would welcome achieving parity with charges set by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Southend being a popular destination from the Rochford District.
- It was felt inappropriate to compare the District with Uttlesford.
- Compared to Southend-on-Sea, taxi drivers within the Rochford District experienced significant amounts of “dead mileage” which had cost/competition implications.

During debate reference was made to aspects of the Rochford District which made it distinct from Southend-on-Sea, particularly geographically. It was observed that “dead mileage” scenarios could be associated with many forms of transportation. With regard to the proposal that the implementation of the night rate be amended from 10.30pm to 9.00pm, comment was made that a high number of taxi users, including the elderly, may make use of the taxi service just at or after 9.00pm and that they would be penalised by change.

In addressing the report and responding to Member questions, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management advised that:-

- When the District Council took responsibility for the taxi service, an objective was to achieve a readily available, safe and efficient service for the travelling public.
- Appendix 2 within the report set out the Southend-on-Sea tariff as it was currently understood. Officers would need to review whether the figures which had been made available to the taxi trade were Southend’s latest approved tariff.
- From the comparison of night rates which had been tabled, it was possible to identify a wide variety of approaches.
- The tariff implementation dates for a number of Authorities were almost two years old and there was a likelihood of an increase during the year.
- Officers would be reviewing the viability of using the Consumer Prices Index to assist in achieving a formula for tariff increases.
- It was important to be mindful that the District's boundaries adjoined those of three Authorities – Southend-on-Sea, Basildon and Castle Point and that naturally hirers would be travelling to these areas.

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Notwithstanding that the tariff review may be appropriate, the Sub-Committee agreed that it would be inappropriate to change the existing implementation time for the night rate as this could unfairly penalise customers and it was **RECOMMENDED** to the Environmental Services Committee that the night rate continue to be implemented at 10.30pm. (HRHM)

Turning to fare charges, Members agreed that it would be inappropriate to reach final recommendations without being able to consider the latest agreed Southend-on-Sea charges in deliberations. It was also agreed that a further Meeting of the Sub-Committee should be convened to address this aspect in time for all recommendations to be submitted to the Environmental Services Committee on 4 September 2003.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and closed at 10.47am.

Chairman

Date