

Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee – 30 January 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee** held on **30 January 2003** when there were present:

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr T Livings

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr C R Morgan

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
A Bugeja	Head of Legal Services
S Clarkson	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
M Martin	Committee Administrator

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE TAXI TRADE

M Chapin	Chairman, Rochford Hackney Carriage Drivers Association
M Street	Secretary, Association of Circuit Company Owners in the Rochford District
A Nelson	Vice-Chairman, Rochford Hackney Carriage Drivers Association
J Charters	Chairman, Association of Circuit Company Owners in the Rochford District

15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted that the Sub-Committee's terms of reference are to consult, consider and report to the Environmental Services Committee on taxi tariffs, licensing fees and charges associated with the trade.

17 CHARGES FOR SERVICES DELIVERED

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which sought the views of the Rochford Hackney Carriage Drivers Association and the Association of Circuit Company Owners in the Rochford District on fees and charges for the Taxi Licensing Function.

Members noted that:-

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- the remit of this Sub-Committee was to make recommendations on a whole range of issues.
- traditionally the fare tariffs would be amended around the months of October/November.
- last year they were agreed at the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee held on 5 December and would have come into force on 2 January 2003.
- A number of taxi drivers had lodged an appeal relating to certain regulations which were to be introduced
- the appeal would be heard on 18 March and the charges, which would have passed on to passengers, had been pending the court hearing.

The Secretary of the Association of Circuit Company Owners suggested that, as the proposed tariff is currently on hold because of the pending appeal, the Committee might wish to consider maintaining the current fares until the next annual review, as a way forward and so avoid the need to pursue the court action.

Members of the Sub-Committee agreed to consider the request from the taxi trade and recommend to the Environmental Services Committee accordingly.

Appended to the report was the schedule of proposed charges for services delivered to the taxi trade. Members noted that the overall aim of the charges review was to rationalise and simplify the range of charges and to provide a service which, over a three year period, would provide a cost neutral service to the Council Taxpayers.

The Head of Revenue and Housing Management reported that in the past the taxi licensing function had operated as an isolated function and had therefore been vulnerable to situations such as staff absence. Council had, therefore, agreed to the creation of a Transportation Section which would deal with taxi licensing, car park administration and the provision of community transport in the District, either directly or through voluntary organisations. Staffing costs would, therefore, be defrayed rather than falling in one area which would in turn lead to lower direct costs.

During discussion of the schedule of proposed charges, it was noted that:-

- Where historically there were few calls on a particular service, the charge had been removed
- There had been a basic increase in fees of 2.5%.
- Short term staffing measures were in place until the new positions in the Transportation Section are filled.

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In response to a suggestion by the taxi trade, officers agreed to look at the possibility of renewing Driver's licences on a three-year cycle rather than on an annual basis.

Recommended

- (1) That the proposals for fare changes are maintained as agreed by the Council pending the Court's determination of the appeal, scheduled for initial hearing on 18 March 2003.
- (2) That the schedule of proposed charges, attached to these Minutes, be approved and advertised. (HRHM)

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

Chairman

Date

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TAXI LICENSING

Pursuant to Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council propose to introduce the following fees and charges for services delivered with effect from 1st April 2003.

	£
Meter fitted & wheelchair accessible vehicles	
Hackney Carriage – 1 st licence	180
Renewal	170
Meter fitted vehicles	
Hackney carriage – 1 st licence	250
Renewal	225
Vehicles with no meter fitted	
Private hire wheelchair accessible	165
Renewal	150
Private hire	210
Renewal	195
Other charges	
Interim vehicle inspection	30
Replacement of plates/emblems/badges	10
<u>Drivers</u>	
Licences	
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire combined – first application/per annum	100
Private Hire – first application/per annum	95
Renewal fee per annum	45
Criminal Record Bureau check	12
Private Hire Operators Licences	
Annual Licence – restricted to 3 vehicles/per annum	70
Over 3 vehicles	100

Chief Executive
Rochford District Council