

LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee of Broadland District Council, held at the Council offices on Wednesday 23 November 2022 at 10:00 am.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: D King (Chairman), S J Catchpole, J Davis, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, K S Kelly, K G Leggett, S M Prutton,
Officers in Attendance:	The Licensing Team Leader (SH), the Licensing Officer (IS) and the Democratic Services Officer (DM)
Others in Attendance:	Sarah Moss – Solicitor NPLaw (the Committee's legal advisor)

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None made.

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: R R Foulger, N Harpley, D G Harrison and M L Murrell.

9 MINUTES

The non-exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

10 MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

**11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS ACT) 1976
TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT 1847 – TAXIMETER TARRIF (TABLE OF
FARES) CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

The report detailed the results of a consultation exercise in respect of a proposed table of fares which would be applicable to any licensed hackney carriages operating in the District from 1 April 2023.

The Licensing Team Leader reminded members that in 2021 the Council had adopted the new Policy and Conditions relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and, as part of this, there was a requirement that all Hackney Carriages be fitted with taximeters with effect from April 2023. A proposed table of fares had been drafted and submitted for an eight week period of consultation.

In setting the charges, attempts had been made to accurately take account of the current and foreseeable financial climate over the next 12 months but this had been difficult because of the unsettled nature of the current financial situation. To ensure that charges remained relevant it was proposed that a system of reviewing fares be adopted. The Licensing Team Leader drew attention to the range of factors which had a direct impact on the costs of operating hackney carriages which would be taken into account in reviewing charges and a table of the source of data on costs was circulated to members and is attached at appendix 1 to the signed copy of these minutes.

The Licensing Team Leader drew attention to the responses received to the consultation and advised the Committee that, where applicable, comments made had been taken into account in drafting the table of charges. A copy of a table of comparative charges with other councils was circulated to members (attached at appendix 2 to the signed copy of these minutes).

The Licensing Team Leader then answered questions from members. She confirmed that, disability needs fell outside the remit of this consultation exercise, which dealt with proposed fares for licensed hackney carriages; the Council's Policy had been reviewed in 2021 and consideration had been given at that time to disability needs, for example, all drivers were now required to undertake disability awareness training. She reaffirmed the proposal to undertake reviews of the charges, probably annually, but in light of the current financial climate, fees would be monitored regularly. It was acknowledged that fares could potentially be reduced as well as increased depending on the prevailing financial circumstances. Any proposed changes to fees would be presented to the Committee / Council for consideration.

Reference was made by members to the shortage of taxis in the district and it was noted that this was due to a number of reasons but had probably been impacted by COVID. There were no Hackney Carriages in Broadland as the district lacked any major market towns or railway stations which tended to

attract the service. It was noted however that compared to other districts, the Council had a large number of licensed private hire vehicles/drivers and the number of applications being received was very high. Members noted that Hackney Carriages could only be hailed or use taxi ranks within the district where the licence was held.

In response to a comment that the proposed fares were at the higher end of the scale of charges made by other councils, the Licensing Team Leader advised that the proposed charges were similar to those adopted in Breckland and Gt Yarmouth where charges had recently been reviewed. Other Councils in the comparison table had not recently reviewed their charges. Officers had been in contact with other local authorities during the formulation of the table of proposed charges. It was also confirmed that the charges proposed set the maximum amounts that Hackney Carriage operators/drivers could charge and that it was possible for lower amounts to be charged than shown on the taximeter or a lower price for a particular journey to be agreed before the start of the journey.. There was however a requirement for a meter to be running during a fare which would show the maximum tariff.

In response to a question about the correlation between private hire charges and hackney carriage charges, the Licensing Team Leader explained that unlike the hackney carriage charges, there was no requirement for councils to produce a table of fares for private hire vehicles and that these were determined by the operator/driver and agreed with a passenger at the point of booking. Hackney carriages tended to be hailed at the side of the road and the table of charges helped to protect the passenger from being overcharged.

Having considered the draft table of fares document and the responses to the consultation exercise, it was

RESOLVED:

To recommend Council to adopt the table of fares document (attached at appendix 3 to the signed copy of these minutes) with a view to the agreed fares taking effect from 1 April 2023.

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was

RESOLVED

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act

1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

13 MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(The meeting concluded at 10.35 am)

Chairman