

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXTRAORDINARY  
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 13 AUGUST 2013 FROM 7:00PM TO 7:35PM**

*Present:- Barrie Patman (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice Chairman), Michael Firmager, Mike Haines, Philip Houldsworth, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Sam Rahmouni, Malcolm Richards and Chris Singleton.*

*Also present:*

*Susan Coulter, Senior Democratic Services Officer;  
Brian Leahy, Team Manager Licensing, Environmental Health & Licensing, West Berkshire Council  
Julia O'Brien, Principal Environmental Health Officer (Licensing);*

## **PART I**

### **9. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Mike Gore, Sue Smith and Dee Tomlin.

### **10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Abdul Loyes declared a personal interest in Item 12 – Hackney Carriage Tariff Review as he knew some of the Hackney Carriage drivers who were present.

### **11. HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF REVIEW**

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 1 to 11, which set out the outcomes of the Public consultation placed in the Wokingham Times on 10 April 2013. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Licensing) advised the Committee that the drivers had been consulted following the January meeting of the Committee, when it had been resolved that the 50% surcharge where a vehicle is carrying more than four passengers – tariff 4 – 6 be removed and replaced with a surcharge of 50 pence per additional person where a vehicle is carrying more than four passengers, regardless of the time of day.

The Council had carried out a statutory consultation and the proposed changes had been advertised in the Wokingham Times on 10 April 2013. A letter was also sent to all drivers informing them of the public consultation in regard to the notice appearing in the Wokingham Times. Responses from 3 individual Wokingham Borough Council drivers were received. The 3 objections were sent to the Chairman of the Committee, who in turn advised other Committee Members. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Licensing) was then advised that the Committee would need to meet formally to make its decision.

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the recommendation set out in the report. He also referred to complaints that the Council had received from members of the public who were unhappy about the current charges. This item had been considered at the Committee's January and March meetings, when the Committee had been advised of what other Council's had been doing with regard to charges. The Committee was advised that not many Council's had the 50% surcharge and it was thought that only Bracknell Forest Council had retained it.

Some Members were concerned about the balance between the public's views and the operators' needs and it was therefore important to see a business case for making the changes to the Tariff. Members were concerned that the report did not set out how the changes would affect the drivers and their incomes.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Licensing) advised that it would be difficult to consider a business case, given that different drivers had different vehicles and worked different hours during the day and night. It would be difficult to find a standard case.

Members were also concerned about the poor response to the consultation. They suggested that the Council's policy needed to be reconsidered, especially in regard to the use of large vehicles by the drivers and costs they incurred.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Licensing) advised that the letter set out on page 5 of the agenda had been sent to **all** Hackney Carriage drivers.

It was proposed and duly seconded that the 50% surcharge be retained and quantitative views be sought from drivers on what the suggested changes to the tariff would mean to their businesses and this to be compared with the wishes of the public. To allow this to happen, a working party be arranged consisting of a selection of Hackney Carriage drivers, members of the public, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members and Licensing Officers.

On being put to the vote, the above was agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the 50% surcharge be retained and quantitative views be sought from drivers on what the suggested changes to the tariff would mean to their business and this to be compared with the wishes of the public; and
- 2) to allow this to happen, a working party be arranged consisting of a selection of Hackney Carriage drivers, members of the public, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members and Licensing Officers.

*These are the Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Licensing and Appeals Committee.*

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