

LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Monday, 29th April, 2024
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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| Present: | Councillor Joan Whieldon (Chair) | | |
| Councillors: | Barker MBE Sweeney Dymond | Wright Allport J Williams | G Williams Brown |
| Apologies: | Councillor(s) Parker, S White, Heesom, Wilkes and Skelding | | |
| Substitutes: | Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Gill Heesom) Councillor John Tagg (In place of Councillor Andrew Parker) | | |
| Officers: | Matthew Burton Geoff Durham Andrew Cotton | Licensing Administration Team Manager Civic & Member Support Officer Assistant Transport Manager | |

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as listed above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO LICENSING MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2024 be agreed as accurate record.

4. **PAVEMENT LICENSING - LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION ACT 2023**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the Pavement Licensing regime originally introduced during the Covid pandemic. This had been made permanent with a number of amendments.

The Deputy Leader expressed his support to the proposal.

Members commented and responses were provided as follows.

Cllr J. Williams enquired about the costs involved in terms of licensing. – It was suggested that the new fee be £216, the legislation allowing it to be anywhere between £0 and £500.

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Cllr Hutchison asked for clarification about the period the license would cover. – The application fee of £216 would be for a two year period. This could be extended for a renewal fee of £158 which would cover another two years.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the report be noted;
2. That the proposed amended standard conditions for all licences be agreed;
3. That the proposed fees for new and renewal applications be agreed; and
4. That the proposed standard licence period be agreed.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO PUBLIC PROTECTION MATTERS

There were no declarations of interest stated.

6. TAXI TARIFFS - PROPOSED INCREASE

The Licensing Administration Team Manager went through the report on the proposed increase to the Taxi Tariffs as requested by the Hackney Carriage Trade Association.

Members commented and responses were provided as follows.

Cllr G. Williams enquired about shift workers and whether it was possible to take into account that some of them would start early morning. – Tariff 2 was in place between midnight and 6.00am and the proposal was for it to be between 10pm and 6am.

Cllr Brown wished to support the proposal being mindful that finding the right balance was a difficult task. – Most authorities would amend the tariffs every year or two and back and forth discussions had been taking place to ensure the proposals submitted to members were reasonable.

Cllr Adcock asked for more background on the changes in night times. – There was more of a night time economy around 2015-19 and the new times suggested were in alignment with other authorities' policies.

Cllr Hutchison asked for clarification about where the tariffs would apply. – As per the law the maximum that may be charged in a Hackney carriage was what on the meter unless the fare was out of town in which case the driver and passenger were to agree a set charge beforehand.

Cllr Hutchison wondered about cases where customers were sick in the car as a result of too much drinking. – There was a set fee but would indeed often involve difficult conversations between the customer and taxi driver. The Chair added that a sign was usually displayed in the vehicle indicating that any excessive fouling would need to be paid for.

The Deputy Leader proposed that the start time for tariff 2 be changed to 11pm instead of 10pm as originally suggested in the report. – The Licensing Administration Team Manager confirmed that this would be viable and could be amended accordingly. Members discussed the proposal which was seconded by Cllr G. Williams and approved unanimously.

Cllr J. Williams asked if a point could be made that some areas were more prosperous than others. – Consistency with tariffs applied by other authorities was sought. The table shared in paragraph 2.4 of the report showed how the tariffs compared to those of Stoke-on-Trent.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages be Members approved;
2. That the proposed Table of metered fares to be advertised and implemented in line with statutory provisions be approved; and
3. That following the consultation period the Table of metered fares be sent to Cabinet for ratification, be approved;
4. That the proposed start time for tariff 2 be amended from midnight to 23:00 hours.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. AMENDMENT OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY PROVISIONS IN RELATION TO TINTED WINDOWS

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the proposed amendment to the provisions within the Taxi Licensing Policy in relation to tinted windows. The Assistant Transport Manager gave further insight – tinted windows meant less use of air conditioning to keep cars cool.

Cllrs G. and J. Williams expressed their support for tinted windows as factory features and disapproval of blackout windows as provided by the aftermarket. – This would mean that when the cars were to be tested any aftermarket tint would need to be removed.

Cllr Adcock asked if option B would make it possible to pass the test with an aftermarket tint. – Vehicles would still need to comply with the regulations and aftermarket films would need to be taken off.

Cllr Hutchison wished to support option A so that cars with factory made tint – which the vehicle owner may not have intentionally chosen – would pass the test. The Chair added that the topic had been discussed at the subcommittee and members were in favour of factory fitted tinted windows which gave a defence to the taxi driver when it came to the safety of lone vulnerable persons at the back of the car.

Resolved: That the current condition in the taxi policy be amended to allow all vehicles to have tinted and privacy glass in the rear passenger windows, provided these are factory fitted tinted / privacy windows and not aftermarket tinting.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. MINUTES OF PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Public Protection Sub Committee meeting held on 13th March 2024 be received.

9. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following matter because it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**Councillor Joan Whieldon
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.55 pm