

# Licensing Committee (Hackney Carriage)

Friday 2 September 2011

## PRESENT:

Councillor Delbridge, in the Chair.  
Councillor Mrs Nicholson, Vice Chair.  
Councillors Bowie, Churchill and Rennie.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Haydon and Reynolds.

Also in attendance: Ann Gillbanks (Senior Lawyer), Andy Netherton (Principal Environmental Health Officer), Ross Johnston (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.25 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 55. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in accordance with the code of conduct.

## 56. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of chairs urgent business.

## 57. **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FEES 2011-2012**

The committee having -

- (a) considered the report from the Director for Community Services –
- (b) heard from the Principal Environmental Health Officer –
  - (i) that it was the Licensing Departments recommendation that the Committee consider extending the advertisement period from 14 days to 28 days to allow for an extended period of objections to the fees;
  - (ii) that driver test fees were proposed to increase to £83 rather than the reported £63;
- (c) heard from the Hackney Carriage trade representatives that –
  - (i) they were very concerned that Criminal Records Bureau had

reduced the searches required for a taxi driver from enhanced to standard and have sent objections to the Home Secretary over this issue;

- (ii) they had several concerns over the state of taxi ranks in Plymouth and felt that many did not conform with statutory requirements;
- (iii) a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on taxi ranks would assist in the enforcement of illegal parking that currently occurred.

Agreed that –

- (1) the new fee structure as set out in the Fees Table, with driver test fees being £83 rather than the reported £63, (Appendix I of the report) is to be advertised in accordance with statutory requirements;
- (2) the period for objections in the advertisements is to be extended to 28 days from 14 days as per the statutory requirements.

## 58. **PROPOSAL FOR A HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF INCREASE**

The committee having -

- (a) considered the report from the Director for Community Services;
- (b) heard from the Principal Environmental Health Officer that –
  - (i) there was a an agreement between the Licensing Department and the Plymouth Licensed Taxi Association (PLTA) to propose a hackney carriage tariff increase, with the both parties submitting their own proposals;
  - (ii) hackney carriage tariffs had not been increased in over three years despite significant increases in costs associated with taxi driving;
- (c) heard from the Hackney Carriage trade representatives that –
  - (i) their proposed hackney carriage tariff increase included proposals for extra charges from the Rail station, River Tamar toll, carrying of luggage and fuel surcharges;
  - (ii) the request for a hackney carriage tariff increase should not be considered excessive when taking into account associated taxi driver costs including the increase in licence fees, insurance, vehicle maintenance and fuel costs;
  - (iii) hackney carriage fares in Plymouth were very competitive with Plymouth currently lying 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 34 in the licensing areas for

the South West of England in relation to a taxi fare for a two mile journey.

Agreed to –

- (1) approve the table of fares proposed at Appendix 3 of the report subject to the following amendments –
  - (i) fuel - change the reference to £1.40 instead of £1.50 to read “to be added to each hiring if and when fuel oil is £1.40 at Exeter Street garage with a further 10p for each subsequent increase of 10p per litre”;
  - (ii) add an additional paragraph to the ‘Out of city and extended period hirings’ to read “toll charges at current rate for return journey”;
- (2) authorise the advertising of the Tariff agreed in Recommendation 1 as required by the Plymouth City Council Act 1975, and to allow the Tariff to come into effect four weeks after the period allowed for objections, which is 28 days, should no objections be received.

59. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

60. **PROPOSAL FOR A HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF INCREASE**

This item was discussed in conjunction with agenda item 58.