

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Committee** held on **Tuesday 10 April 2018** at **5.00 pm** in **Conference Chamber East, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Frank Warby

John Burns
Sarah Broughton
Mike Chester
Mary Evans
Wayne Hailstone

Beccy Hopfensperger
Margaret Marks
David Nettleton
Richard Rout
Peter Thompson

Substitutes attending:
Patricia Warby

By Invitation:
Susan Glossop

85. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clive Springett.

86. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Patricia Warby for Councillor Clive Springett.

87. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

88. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were unanimously accepted by the Committee as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

89. **Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2018**

[Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger arrived at 5.05pm during the discussion and subsequent voting on this item]

The Committee received Report No: LIC/SE/18/002, which asked members to consider the proposed hackney carriage fare alignments. It was reported that Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enabled St Edmundsbury Borough Council, at its discretion to fix and vary the tariff for Hackney Carriages that were licenced by the Council.

Under the Council's Constitution, the Committee could set or refuse hackney fares, and reviewed annually. However, on this occasion, the review was anticipating the alignment of the fares in respect of the "Single Council approach".

The tariffs for both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council differed widely. Therefore, it was proposed that fees should be aligned in two stages, which was set out within the report. A number of appendices were also attached to Report No: LIC/SE/18/002, as follows:

- (Appendix 1) – Current fare cards;
- (Appendix 2) – Proposed fare cards;
- (Appendix 3) – Fare comparisons;
- (Appendix 4) – Consultation form to all West Suffolk Drivers; and
- (Appendix 5) – Consultation raw data.

The Committee was asked to consider the following two options (see below), which were aimed at staging the changes to fares in a way that the Council could achieve its goal of aligning fares for a Single Council without negatively affecting the trade. It was also asked to consider which fares would be preferable to the public and the trade by April 2019:

Option 1: Approve the advertising of the proposed new Hackney Carriage fares for St Edmundsbury; or

Option 2: Approve the advertising of the proposed new Hackney Carriage fares devised for St Edmundsbury, and recommend which set of fares to be considered for Stage 2 to be in place for Single Council on 1 April 2019.

The Licensing Team Leader wished to stress to members that the proposed fare figures (Appendix 2) had been pulled together by members of the hackney trade (the trade) and not council officers. She explained in detail that the council had engaged with the trade at an early stage by asking the trade to come in and help the council to look at aligning the fares and the amount of tariffs, as far as possible, in a joint effort to close the current gaps for running miles prices/flags between the Forest Heath trade and St Edmundsbury trade, prior to Single Council. The fares being proposed by the trade had also been scrutinised and overseen by the councils meter agents (Digitax and Panther Taxis), who calibrated all hackney meters for the council prior to being presented to the Committee.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided.

Some members expressed their disappointment that the proposed fares were still worked out in yards and not miles which was confusing, including the initial waiting times; that the whole fare structure was wrong; and were not happy with the suggested increases and felt they should be capped as it wanted to look after its residents who wanted to use taxis in the evening.

In response, the Licensing Team Leader reiterated to the committee that the St Edmundsbury hackney trade had collectively agreed the proposed new tariffs, which still had to be consulted on with the public. Furthermore, there had not been a fare increase since 2015.

Some members of the committee stated that they were struggling to understand the figures, which they felt were outdated, and that they now had a chance to reform the fares before Single Council in 2019.

During discussions the committee admitted it did not have a thorough understanding/knowledge of how the fares were calculated. In response the Licensing Team Leader explained how the yardage and waiting times were reached. She then informed the committee that by law the council had to consult the public on the proposed fare increases, and how the fare meters were set up and calibrated using yards and not miles nationally. However, King's Lynn Hackney Carriage Trade had changed their fares to miles.

She reiterated that due to timing issues, the meeting this evening was about aligning the tariffs for 2019, and the trade was proposing having three tariffs moving forward rather than the current six tariffs which was confusing. The council could then look at remodelling the fare tariffs from 2019 onwards.

Councillor Peter Thompson questioned whether it would not be easier to go with option 1 (approve the advertising of the proposed new hackney carriage fares for St Edmundsbury), and then stage 2 at a later date, which was supported by Councillor David Nettleton.

Councillor Margaret Marks then further suggested that officers could explore the King's Lynn Hackney Fares model, which the Licensing Team Leader had explained earlier was using miles instead of yards, which was supported by Councillor Mary Evans.

It was then proposed by Councillor Peter Thompson, seconded by Councillor David Nettleton and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1) Option 1, as set out in Paragraph 3.1.2 to Report No: LIC/SE/18/002, be approved, and that officers also be asked to look further into the King's Lynn Hackney Carriage Fare model prior to Single Council.

- 2) Subject to the statutory procedure relating to public objections, the effective date of the implementation of the new Hackney Carriage fares increase be on 4 June 2018.

90. **Proposals to Declare an Air Quality Management Area Designation on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds**

The Committee received Report No: LIC/SE/18/003, which updated members on the findings of the external consultation on proposals to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds. Based on the statutory guidance under the Regulations and following discussion with key stakeholders, consultation was undertaken with both statutory and non-statutory consultees including the relevant District and County Councillors, properties within the proposed AQMA, Suffolk County Council Highways and the planning officer and planning agent for the Abbotts Vale development. The consultation provided respondents with the opportunity to make any representation with respect to the proposed designation.

The results of the external consultation were set out in the report, and based on the outcome of the consultation, the Committee was asked to approve the declaration of the AQMA designation on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds as laid out in the Order attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Committee considered the report and asked questions to which responses were provided.

Councillor Sarah Broughton informed the Committee that she supported the proposal for an AQMA on Sicklesmere Road. She explained that her ward of Great Barton had an AQMA and the Steering Group was working well in supporting the development of the AQMA Action Plan.

Councillor David Nettleton responded by stating that the council should be looking at the symptoms, and not the disease. He explained that there would be more AQMA's needed in the future if the council did not start tackling the cause, by taking urgent action to reduce the use of cars.

It was then proposed by Councillor Sarah Broughton, seconded by Councillor David Nettleton and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That based on the review and findings of the consultation, the declaration of the Air Quality Management Area designation on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds, as shown in Appendix A to Report No: LIC/SE/18/003, be approved.

The Meeting concluded at 5.38 pm

Signed by:

Chairman