

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

**Notes of Extraordinary, Informal Discussions held on Tuesday
29 January 2019 at 6.14pm in the Conference Chamber West,
West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)

Councillor Clive Springett
(Vice-Chairman in the Chair for the informal discussions)

Councillors John Burns, Mike Chester, Susan Glossop, David Nettleton
and Patricia Warby.

Forest Heath District Council (FHDC)

Councillors Simon Cole, Brian Harvey, Victor Lukaniuk and Carol Lynch.

Prior to the formal meeting, a 6.14pm informal joint discussions took place on the following item:

- (1) Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2019 Stage 2 – Final Proposals Following Public Consultation.

All Members of Forest Heath District Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee had been invited to attend West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds to enable joint informal discussions on the above report to take place between the two authorities.

The Business Partner (Litigation/Licensing) welcomed all those present to West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds and advised on the format of the proceedings for the informal joint discussions and subsequent separate meetings of each authority, prior to handing over to the Vice-Chairman in the Chair for St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee, who would be chairing the informal joint discussions.

Members noted that each Council permitted public participation at their Licensing and Regulatory meetings. Therefore, for the purpose of facilitating these Constitutional requirements, it was proposed that public speaking should be permitted prior to the start of the informal discussions to enable any questions/statements to be considered by both Licensing and Regulatory Committees on the above item.

On this occasion there was one question / statement put forward by members of the public.

Public Participation

Mr Emil MacKenzie, a St Edmundsbury Hackney Driver / Owner addressed the Committee on Item 4 on the agenda; Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2019 Stage 2 – Final Proposals Following Public Consultation.

He made referred to Appendix C attached to the Report and the yardage and mileage differences. In particular he suggested a 20p rise over a 7 mile journey. He then explained he had worked out his own tariffs, which were included in the report presented to the Committee on 4 December 2018.

The Chairman thanked the public speakers for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

The report was then considered as set on each authorities agenda.

1. Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2019 Stage 2 – Final Proposals Following Public Consultation

The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) presented the above report, which informed members on preparations in relation to the hackney carriage fares for the creation of a single and West Suffolk Council and addressed issues raised during the statutory two week public consultation.

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowered local authorities, at its discretion to set the fares charged by Hackney Carriages licensed within their district or borough.

It was reported that a review of fares was started in April 2018, with stage one of the fare alignment across West Suffolk. The review was primarily undertaken to prepare for the creation of a West Suffolk Council in April 2019, but it had also taken into account the time passed since previous fare reviews. The proposed fares from Stage 2 of the review included the first increase for St Edmundsbury drivers since 2015 and for Forest heath drivers since 2014.

An Extraordinary, Informal Joint meeting of the Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committees was held on 4 December 2018. The fares set out in Appendix A to this report, which had been consulted on with members of the taxi trade only, were discussed at that meeting. Following feedback from the trade and officer recommendations, Councillors agreed the following changes:

- Bringing back the start time for the night time tariff to midnight from 11pm; and
- Removing the use of an extras button for 5+ passenger vehicles, used at the end of a journey, and replacing it with three additional tariffs for carrying extra passengers.

This had created a set of tariffs to be consulted on with the public, which was agreed by the Committees (attached at Appendix B to the report). Members also asked officers about the possibility of simplifying and clarifying the fare

description. This had been taken on board and formed part of the final recommendations.

It was reported that setting the maximum fares hackney carriages could charge should be a fair and open process, which was why both councils were committed to improving simplicity and affordability for the customers, whilst ensuring fairness for taxi drivers and proprietors.

The report included information on the background; adjustments; and options. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

- Appendix A: Stage 2 trade consultation tariffs, November 2018;
- Appendix B: Stage 2 public consultation tariffs, December 2018;
- Appendix C: Proposed New West Suffolk fare card 2019 (updated);
- Appendix D: Public consultation representations;
- Appendix E: Running mile comparisons.

The Committee was asked to consider the following three options in aligning taxi fares:

Option 1: It was recommended that the updated fare proposals, set out in Appendix C, be adopted for use from 18 February 2019, and continued into the creation of a single council for West Suffolk from 1 April 2019.

Option 2: Adopt the updated fare proposal as set out in Appendix C, with an additional change: a 20p baggage charge, as previously adopted in Forest Heath.

Option 3: To make no further adjustments and adopt the publicly consulted set of tariffs agreed on 4 December 2018 by both committees to commence on 18 February 2019.

The recommended option put forward by officers was Option 1, as it reflected feedback from the public and the trade and remained affordable for customers.

The Licensing Team Leader confirmed that public speakers tariff proposals were included in Appendix 2, Trade Consultation, which was presented to the Committee 4 December 2018. She also explained that the tariffs had to be in yards, inches and miles as set out in the legislation.

The Committees' then considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

Discussions were held on the taxi livery and future work, which will be carried out on the livery; terminology used regarding time and distance; wheelchair accessible vehicles; the displaying of tariff cards in the back of hackney carriages; the proposed fare start date, and whether the fare cards could be simplifying further in future reviews, to which responses were provided.

In response to a question raised regarding the legality of the fares and how the fares for the new West Suffolk Council would be implemented on 1 April 2019.

Officers explained the Consequential Order would automatically carry over the fares to the new West Suffolk Council.

In response to a question raised relating to what the process was for ensuring that all Hackney Carriages were ready for the new fares being proposed on 18 February 2019, officers explained that both councils held lists of all Hackney Carriages. Everyone would be written too inviting them over a two week period to have their meters re-calibrated so they were ready for the new fares by 18 February 2019. The majority of the work was organised by the Licensing Team. Meter agents would carry out the work, who would spend a day in Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds. If anyone could not attend the dates, then they could go to any meter agent to have their meters re-calibrated.

Following the conclusion of discussions, the Chairman then drew member's attentions to the options set out in the report. The general consensus reached by the two Committees was to approve Option 1, summarised in Appendix C.

On the conclusion of the informal joint discussions at 7.07pm all members remained in Conference Chamber West.

The Vice-Chairman in the Chair then formally opened the Forest Heath District Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee in the presence of St Edmundsbury members, in Conference Chamber West at 7.08pm.

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Committee** held on **Tuesday 29 January 2019** at **7.08pm** in **Conference Chamber West, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Vice Chairman in the chair Brian Harvey

Simon Cole
Victor Lukaniuk

Carol Lynch

This was the last meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee before it's dissolution on 6 May 2019. As a result, the minutes of the meeting remain as drafted following the meeting and cannot be confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair. This is consistent with all other dissolved Committees and bodies.

107. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Anderson, Chris Barker, John Bloodworth and Nigel Roman.

Councillor Christine Mason was also unable to attend the meeting.

108. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutions declared.

109. **Public Participation**

This item was considered in the informal joint session with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, whereby the Committee heard from one Hackney Carriage drivers.

110. **Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2019 Stage 2 - Final Proposals Following Public Consultation**

Further to the informal joint discussions held prior to the meeting with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee, the Committee formally considered Report No: LIC/FH/19/001.

Councillor Simon Cole moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Carol Lynch and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED:

That the updated West Suffolk Fare Card, being Option 1, summarised in Appendix C, to Report No: LIC/FH/19/001, be approved.

The meeting concluded at 7.09pm