

## LICENSING COMMITTEE

1.00 P.M.

7TH APRIL 2022

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Colin Hartley (Chair), Mel Guilding (Vice-Chair), Paul Anderton, Mandy Bannon, Gerry Blaikie, Roger Dennison and Andrew Gardiner

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Roger Cleet and Abi Mills

Officers in attendance:

Jennifer Curtis	Licensing Manager
Tom Mitchell	Civil Lawyer
Sarah Moorghen	Democratic Support Officer
Amy Gardner	Customer Services Advisor (Legal Work Experience)

### 47 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 48 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

### 49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 50 EXEMPT ITEM

The Chair advised Members that it had been recommended to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information.

It was moved by Councillor Andrew Gardiner and seconded by Councillor Roger Dennison:

“That, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

A vote was taken and unanimously carried.

***Resolved:***

That, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act

**51 EXISTING DUAL DRIVERS LICENCE HOLDER (PAGE 6)**

The Committee received the report of the Licensing Manager for the purpose of determining a review of an existing dual Drivers Licence.

Details of the individual case and the Chair's summary of the decision are set out in Exempt Minute No. 51 in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

***Decision of the Committee:***

The decision of the Committee is set out in Exempt Minute No 51.

***The press and public were readmitted to the meeting at this point.***

**52 ANNUAL REPORT - LICENSING SERVICE**

Under the scheme of public participation, Mr Robin Mitchell of 848 848 Taxi's spoke in connection to the report.

The Chair thanked Mr Mitchell for his address and responded to Mr Mitchell's question.

The Licensing Manager presented a report which provided an annual update to members of the Licensing Committee on private hire/hackney carriage related matters, including volume of applications, complaints, and enforcement activity.

It was reported that there was currently 788 active Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences in the district. The number of new licenses for drivers (16), vehicles (15) and operators (4) issued in the calendar year had been low due to the pandemic and licence holders finding other employment opportunities.

The Committee was advised that there had been 105 licence renewals and on 4 occasions renewals had been determined by the Licensing Committee.

It was reported that 57 complaints had been investigated by the Licensing Service between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

The Committee was also advised that 57 inspections had been carried out on licenced vehicles with 42 issued with defect notices.

Members asked questions in relation to encouraging more availability of wheelchair accessible taxis.

***Resolved:***

(1) That the report be noted.

**53 PROGRESS UPDATE RE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATUTORY TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS**

The Licensing Manager presented a report which provided the Committee with an update on progress regarding the implementation of standards outlined in the Department for Transport (DfT) "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards" (the Standards).

The Standards were appended to the report for the consideration of the Committee.

An action plan outlining the progress from 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to the current position was appended to the report for members consideration. The Committee was asked to consider whether there were any additional actions required in terms of the Standards.

It was proposed by Councillor Roger Dennison and seconded by Councillor Gerry Blaikie:

- “(1) That the Committee note the report and the updated action plan, and;
- (2) That there are currently no additional actions required by the Committee in terms of the DFT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.”

Upon being put to the vote, 6 Councillors voted in favour with 1 abstention, whereupon the Chair declared the proposal to have been carried.

***Resolved:***

- (1) That the Committee note the report and the updated action plan, and;
- (2) That there are currently no additional actions required by the Committee in terms of the DFT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

**54 HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE REVIEW 2022**

The Licensing Manager presented a report on the Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2022.

It was reported that at the meeting of the Licensing Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022, members had recommended to Cabinet an uplift to flag fall across 3 tariffs, by a suggested amount of 50p and a 10p uplift to waiting charges. The recommendation was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Cabinet had asked officers to carry out an immediate informal consultation exercise with hackney carriage drivers and to gather feedback on options for increasing fares, taking into account the need to increase the rate earned per mile, and the policy position on Retail Price Index (RPI). The Licensing Committee had been asked to report their findings back to Cabinet at their meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2022.

The proposed tariff options and summary of fares was appended to the report for the Committee's consideration.

The Committee was advised the consultation survey had been available online from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and that there had been a total of 149 responses received with 92 responses received to the follow up survey.

96.6% of the 149 respondents had wanted an increase to the current tariff with 90.6% wanting any increase to apply to both flag-fall and the rolling rate.

The Committee discussed a number of issues including the application of the RPI and balancing increasing rates with not putting off customers. Members also agreed to consult with the local trade through the Taxi Working Group prior to the next annual review of fares.

It was moved by Councillor Andrew Gardiner and seconded by Councillor Roger Dennison:

“That the following recommendation be referred to Cabinet;

- (1) That Option 2 be adopted as the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff 2022/23.
- (2) That Hackney Carriage fare reviews will be undertaken annually, by applying retail price index (RPI) across the tariff, to both flag-fall and rolling rate.
- (3) That Any calculation resulting in pence will be round down to the nearest 5p.
- (4) That Consultation with the local licensed trade be carried out via the Taxi Working Group prior to the annual review, and;
- (5) That approval be given to the Licensing Manager to advertise the adjusted table of fares as required by Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.”

A vote was taken and unanimously carried.

***Resolved;***

That the following recommendation be referred to Cabinet;

- (1) That Option 2 be adopted as the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff 2022/23.
- (2) That Hackney Carriage fare reviews will be undertaken annually, by applying retail price index (RPI) across the tariff, to both flag-fall and rolling rate.
- (3) That Any calculation resulting in pence will be round down to the nearest 5p.
- (4) That Consultation with the local licensed trade be carried out via the Taxi Working Group prior to the annual review, and;
- (5) That approval be given to the Licensing Manager to advertise the adjusted table of fares as required by Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

**55 HACKNEY CARRIAGE SPECIFICATION - ROOF-SIGN REQUIREMENTS**

The Licensing Manager presented a report on hackney carriage roof-sign requirements.

The Committee was advised that as part of the new private hire and hackney carriage policy, vehicle specifications for both vehicles had been updated. For hackney carriages, a standardised roof-sign was approved by Licensing Committee.

It was reported that since notification of this requirement a number of calls and e-mails had been received from hackney carriage proprietors questioning the reason for the changes to roof signs. The drivers that had contacted the licensing service had raised concerns about the cost burden that this would have at a time of increased fuel costs and before any new fare tariff had been agreed/implemented.

The Committee was advised that the cost of the roof sign was £90 with the option to spread the cost in instalments.

It was reported that a 12 week consultation had taken place between 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The consultation exercise had resulted in 12 responses, with no feedback on livery or signage, including roof-signs.

The Committee discussed a number of matters including the low response rate to the consultation, whether sign aerodynamics had been considered and the impact on the company delivering the signs of delaying the requirement for roof-signs.

It was moved by Councillor Mel Guilding and seconded by Councillor Andrew Gardiner:

“(1) That the implementation of the requirement for roof-signs on hackney carriage vehicles be paused for no less than 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022”

By way of a friendly amendment, Councillor Roger Dennison asked if the term “no less than 12 months” could be amended to “12 months”.

Councillor Mel Guilding and her seconder accepted this as a friendly amendment.

By way of a further amendment, Councillor Colin Hartley then proposed:

*“That the implementation of the requirement for roof-signs on hackney carriage vehicles be paused for 6 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022”*

There was no seconder and the proposal failed.

Members then voted on the amended proposal which was unanimously carried.

**Resolved:**

(1) That the implementation of the requirement for roof-signs on hackney carriage vehicles be paused for 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

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Chair

(The meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Sarah Moorghen, Democratic Services - email [smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk)**

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