

## LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held in the District Council Chamber, South Lakeland House, Kendal, on Monday, 17 January 2022, at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Councillors

Helen Ladhams (Chairman)  
Alvin Finch (Vice-Chairman)

Rupert Audland  
Brian Cooper

Kevin Holmes  
Helen Irving

Andrew Jarvis  
David Webster

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fiona Hanlon, Doug Rathbone and Ian Wharton.

Officers

Patrick Cantley	Specialist, Licensing
James Cartwright	Case Management - Support Services
Nicola Clark	Specialist - Environmental Protection
Neil Gardiner	Licensing (Specialist)
Sean Hall	Principal Specialist (Health & Environment)
Adam Moffatt	Legal, Governance and Democracy Specialist
Josie Smith	Legal, Governance and Democracy Specialist

### **LR/7 MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the Chairman be authorised to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 29 November 2021.

### **LR/8 MINUTES OF LICENSING REGULATORY SUB-COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED – That the Chairman be authorised to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee, held on 26 November 2021.

### **LR/9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

RESOLVED – That it be noted that the a non-pecuniary interest was raised by Councillor David Webster for transparency, that his daughter had a connection to a local taxi company.

### **LR/10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUDED ITEMS**

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there are no excluded items on the agenda.

**LR/11****PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mrs Sarah Ibbetson addressed the Committee with regard to Agenda Item No.7 - Review of Hackney Carriage Fares representing the local Taxi Association.

Mrs Ibbetson expressed her concerns that there had been no plans for an annual review, and under current policy no further review would occur until 2026. She understood the costs of undertaking a review, but questioned whether the Council could then assure that there would be no increase in licensing fees during the same period. Mrs Ibbetson raised concerns with regard to the current and future inflation rates and the impact this would have on taxi drivers.

Mrs Ibbetson informed Members that due to the unique nature of the local taxi trade and the Council's policy on older vehicles, it was difficult to compare Barrow-In-Furness with the South Lakeland area as the geography of the area meant that over half of taxi journeys were made empty

Mrs Ibbetson expressed the need to ensure that drivers were supported by any decision made by the Committee as the last fare increase had been in 2014.

Mr Andrzej Jedynak addressed the Committee with regard to Agenda Item No.7 - Review of Hackney Carriage Fares representing Ace Taxis.

Mr Jedynak reiterated to Members the difficulty faced by all due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, he informed Members that a lot of taxi drivers had changed profession as they couldn't make enough money, noting that the last fee increase had been seven years ago. As a result, his company had become short-staffed and had drivers coming from outside of South Lakeland to take the positions left vacant.

Mr Jedynak noted that taxi fares nationally should be increased due to the increase in cost of parts and that new vehicles had become more expensive to buy, particularly when taking into account the cost of electric vehicles. Mr Jedynak concluded his address by informing Members that raising maximum fares would not necessarily result in increased charges across the board, as the fares charged were at the discretion of taxi companies and drivers, with some discounts being provided for local residents.

Mr Phil Kirkby addressed the Committee with regard to Agenda Item No.7 - Review of Hackney Carriage Fares as an employee of Ace Taxis.

Mr Kirkby informed Members that due to the increased popularity of South Lakeland as a holiday destination, new hotels had opened and there had been significant changes to the night-time economy. He emphasised the need to increase fares to match the increase to the fees being charged by hotels and other local businesses as taxi drivers were still using the same basic rate as seven years ago. He concluded by assuring Members that, in his opinion, the local market would support an increase to the maximum fares.

Mr David Hope addressed the Committee with regard to Agenda Item No.7 - Review of Hackney Carriage Fares as an employee of Ace Taxis.

Mr Hope informed Members that typically, locals had been charged twenty percent cheaper fares and that local customers had no access to appropriate public transport.

Mr Hope highlighted that money made by local taxi drivers helped to support the local economy. He expressed the need to support the local economy by increasing taxi fares which would provide jobs and help to promote a sustainable local economy.

## **LR/12 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES**

The Specialist (Licensing) presented a report which outlined the review of Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff following a request to review. Requests had initially been made in 2020 but the review had been deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The fares had last been reviewed by the Committee at its meeting on 7 June 2016, when it had been decided to make no changes to the fares at the time.

The report informed Members that officers from the Licensing Department had surveyed the Hackney vehicle trade on potential fare options. The Specialist (Licensing) outlined the five options presented as part of the survey. Of the 274 Hackney carriage drivers surveyed, 51 had replied, which represented 18.6% of the drivers contacted. The Specialist (Licensing) directed Members to a full summary of the survey and collated driver emails in Appendix A to the report.

The report further stated that current fares stood at £3.70 for the first mile (or part thereof) and then £2.70 for the second mile.

The report suggested that if Members were minded to increase the Hackney Fare Tariff, three options were recommended based on the collated information. The Specialist (Licensing) reminded Members that the Committee may wish to set a different percentage increase to the fare tables or retain the existing tariff as referenced.

The Principal Specialist (Environment) and the Specialist (Licensing) responded to questions raised by members.

There was a general agreement by Members that it had been a long time since the last fare review, and that inflation, minimum wages, fuel costs and vehicle prices had all risen significantly since then. It was felt that the report's suggestion of a fare rise of 2.9% was too low, but that the drivers' proposed increase of 9.75% was too high. It was therefore proposed and seconded, that a fare increase of 5.4% be considered. The Chairman then moved to vote on the proposed increase of 5.4%.

It was unanimously

**RESOLVED – That:-**

(1) the maximum Hackney Carriage Fares be increased by 5.4% across all tariffs, subject to the consultation period lasting no less than fourteen days.

The meeting ended at 3.02 p.m.