

LICENSING COMMITTEE

3 March 2023 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillors Cooper (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Blanchard-Cooper, Clayden, Daniells, Hamilton, Kelly, Northeast and Oliver-Redgate

Apologies: Councillors Gregory, Roberts and Worne

742. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

743. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 December 2022 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair. The Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 9 January 2022, 23 January 2023, 30 January 2023, 6 February 2023 and 20 February 2023 were noted by the Committee.

744. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items.

745. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that there had been no questions from the public submitted for this meeting.

746. TAXI FARE SETTING

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Licensing Officer presented the report which sought the Committee's agreement of the table of taxi fares [in Appendix 2 of the Officer report] following consultation, with increases for 2023/24 to come into effect from 1 April 2023, to ensure a balance between taxi drivers making a living and what customers would be willing to pay. It was noted that the emergency increase of 10p in the previous year (which many drivers had not taken advantage of due to the cost of recalibrating their meters) had not kept up with fuel prices and that, due to the cost of living increases, drivers also faced other increased costs associated with insurance and vehicle repairs. It was also remarked that since lockdown the number of taxi journeys had decreased as more things (such as shopping) were done online. The Licensing Officer then outlined some of the increases detailed in the report.

Members noted positively on the significant amount of feedback received during the consultation and thanked the Officers for their work on this item. Members recognised the difficulties for the public in raising fares and the increases in several costs for drivers, but appreciated that these were sensible increases following a

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thorough process ensuring things were done in a controlled way. Whether there was a need for fare charging distinctions between diesel, hybrid or electric vehicles to incentivise transition to greener vehicles was also raised. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that a transition of the fleet to electric vehicles was best managed through taxi policy via fees charged to operators. He noted that the taxi policy had recently been consulted on and once Officers had had the opportunity to go through all the responses to the consultation an amended taxi policy would come before the Committee. It was also confirmed that the increases would be communicated on the Council's website. The Chair thanked the Officer team and concluded that the increases struck a good balance to ensure taxis remained in the District for the public to use. The recommendation was then proposed by Councillor Clayden and seconded by Councillor Blanchard-Cooper.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the table of fares set out in Appendix 2 be agreed with effect from 1 April 2023.

747. LICENSING COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3

The Chair confirmed that the report was an information paper with no recommendations for the Committee to consider and was taken as read by Members. The Committee noted the report and commended Officers on their performance.

(The meeting concluded at 9.47 am)