

Medway Council
Meeting of Licensing Sub-Committee
Friday, 5 August 2022
2.32pm to 3.00pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Mrs Diane Chambers (Chairman), Kemp, McDonald and Prenter

In Attendance: Mandy Francis, Licensing Manager
Nigel Jackson, Chairman, MLTDA
Venky Krishnan, Licensing and Litigation Lawyer
Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

152 Election of Chairman for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers was elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year.

153 Election of Vice-Chairman for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year

Councillor Fearn was elected Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year.

154 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Fearn.

155 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 22 April 2022 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

156 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

157 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

158 Review of Hackney Carriage Tariff

Discussion:

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the outcome of the recent consultation with the Medway-licensed taxi trade as part of the review of the Hackney Carriage tariff. The Licensing Manager reported that 456 drivers had been consulted and 292 responses had been received, the majority of which were in favour of a decrease in the distance unit from 190 yards to 170, this being Option C. This would increase the 2-mile fare (on tariff 1) from £6.60 to £7.00 and to £11.20 on a 4 mile journey. The Licensing Manager gave comparable figures for Options A and B as specified in the agenda report, with a 4 mile journey costing £10.80 under Option A and £11 under Option B. She advised that most journeys were under 4 miles and the fare for a 2 mile journey would increase by 20 pence under Option A and 40 pence under Options B and C.

The Licensing Manager referred the Sub-Committee to Appendix C of the agenda report and Appendix D of the supplementary agenda. These were benchmarking league tables, as at April and August 2022 respectively, ranking licensing authorities from the highest to the lowest based on the cost of a 2 mile journey on tariff 1. These placed Medway in 9th place in April and 10th place in August, out of the 13 Kent local authorities.

The Licensing Manager advised that there was an amendment to paragraph 3.3 of the agenda report, in that Option C would have placed Medway in 6th place in April 2022, and not 3rd as stated in the report. For August, Option C would place Medway in 8th place.

The Committee was asked to consider the information in the report and determine which option to proceed with.

The Chairman invited Nigel Jackson, the Chairman of the Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (MLTDA) to address the Sub-Committee. He said that the costs of running a taxi business was at an all time high and that Option C would help make businesses sustainable and better able to compete with Uber. It would also bring Medway in line with Gravesham.

Members of the Sub-Committee welcomed the good response rate to the consultation and spoke in favour of Option C, noting that individual drivers were free to charge less than the tariff rate if they wished.

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The Licensing Manager was asked to provide an update on the introduction of contactless payments. She advised that she was due to meet with the Chairman of the MLTDA to discuss this and aimed to bring proposals to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee for making it mandatory for all drivers to offer a contactless payment option. It was requested that this report include a benchmarking table similar to the one that had been provided for tariff comparisons.

Decision:

The Sub-Committee agreed that the Hackney Carriage tariff be revised based on Option C, a decrease in the distance unit from 190 yards to 170 yards, which would increase the distance element of the tariff by up to 12%.

Chairman

Date:

Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332011

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

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