

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet Member for Localism and Enforcement** held on Tuesday, 1st July, 2014 in Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Gilbert.

Councillor in attendance

S Davies.

Officers in attendance

Kim Evans – Licensing Team Leader

Paul Mountford – Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

A number of hackney carriage drivers spoke in respect of the proposals and asked questions concerning the implementation period, why changes were now being proposed despite the fact that some areas/taxi driver associations were already in agreement with the proposals, and what would be achieved by a further period of consultation.

The Chairman responded that the implementation period would be explained as part of the forthcoming consultations; the Council was taking account of the responses received and he wanted all previous consultees to have the chance to respond to the revised proposals which, it was hoped, would achieve a greater consensus. In addition the Chairman wanted to ensure the trade remained viable.

4 VARIATION TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF FARES

Consideration was given to the Table of Fees applicable in each of the Council's three Hackney Carriage Zones, and to responses received following the publication of statutory Notices.

It was reported that work on the potential harmonisation of fares across the Borough had first started in June 2011 and on 7 January 2013 the Portfolio Holder had approved that, in line with an earlier recommendation of the Licensing Committee (5 November 2012 refers), formal consultation should be conducted on the harmonisation of fares across the Borough.

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 gave the Local Authority the discretion to set the maximum fares payable in connection with the hire of a hackney carriage vehicle. The legislation also set out

requirements for the publication of Notices, and the receipt and consideration of objections. It was confirmed that these had been complied with throughout the process. A requirement was that the fares had to be set out in a 'Table of Fares' and on 28 April 2014 the Portfolio Holder agreed that Notices of the Proposed Table of Fares should be published without amendment. A 21 day period was given in which responses could be made and as a result a significant number were received.

In considering the representations and comments the Portfolio Holder reported that he considered residents needed to come first, that taxis provided a public service, and the interests of the service users were paramount. Taxi owners were, however, also residents of Cheshire East and there needed to be a balance between the interests of the trade and the public. If fares were set too low the quantity and quality of taxi provision would suffer and this was not in the public interest.

Having considered the information in the report, responses to the consultation, and the guidance given, the Portfolio Holder still believed that there should be a harmonisation of the three tables of fares. Harmonisation in one leap, however, had the potential to disproportionately affect some service users, especially those on fixed or limited incomes. In response to representations received he reported that the right to charge for waiting time would be retained. Also, to recognize that larger vehicles were more expensive to buy and run, and to encourage the availability of taxis with higher capacity, a charge would be introduced for extra passengers.

RESOLVED

1. To confirm that the current Tables of Fares in each zone will remain unchanged.
2. That the Licensing Team Leader be requested to prepare options for the staggered harmonisation the Table of Fares; those proposals should include waiting time and extra charges for passengers in excess of one.
3. That a further report be presented setting out those proposals prior to further consultation with the licensed trade.

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm