

Licensing and Appeals Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2016

Present

Councillor Longsdon (in the Chair)

Councillors Austin-Behan, Barrett, Hughes, S. Judge, Loughman, Ludford, and Paul.

Apologies

Councillors, Gillard, Grimshaw, Monaghan and Royle.

LAP/16/6 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 11 January 2016 were submitted for consideration as a correct record.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2016.

LAP/16/7 Street Collection Permits Annual report

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. The report provided information on the street collection permits allocated for 2015 and the returns from those collections. The report also provided information on permits requests received to date for 2016 and the decisions made in respect of them.

The allocation of street collection permits is made in accordance with the Street Collection Permits Allocation and Monitoring Policy approved by this Committee on 29 October 2012.

The Committee commended the updated format of the report, as it was much easier to read and has improved from the format presented in previous years. The Committee thanked the officers who prepared the report for addressing the concerns raised in previous years.

Decision

To note the report.

LAP/16/8 Unmet Demand Survey September 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. The Principal Licensing Officer addressed the Committee and explained that the person who had undertaken the research and should have been giving a full presentation of the report was unable to attend this Committee for personal reasons. The Principal Licensing Officer requested that the Committee submit questions in the absence of this officer, and that the report be presented in full to the next meeting of this Committee.

Decision

To request that the report is presented in full to the next meeting of this Committee.

LAP/16/9 Hackney Carriage Fare Review for July 2016 – July 2017

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing. This report provided the Committee with the information required to make a recommendation to the Executive in respect of the hackney carriage fare review. The report outlined the component parts of the Halcrow-Manchester formula, which have been updated with figures sourced on or after 1 December 2015.

The report advised that in reviewing the hackney carriage fare that the Halcrow Manchester formula is not taken in isolation and that consideration is also given to additional factors such as CPI and comparable earnings.

The report also provided two responses from the hackney carriage trade in relation to the fare review.

The Committee queried the figures given for the cost of parts included in the formula, as they seemed to be very high. The Committee were told that this was because the figures were calculated by using the cost of branded London Taxi Company parts, rather than generic parts. The Committee were told that this was because Hackney vehicles are specialist vehicles so require specialist parts to prevent performance issues that might be evident if generic, non-branded parts are used. In addition the Committee were told that the costs shown had been averaged for the UK and over the life of the vehicle.

A representative of the taxi trade addressed the Committee and explained that the Halcrow Manchester formula is not a mechanism to set a fare rate, but a tool that shows the percentage (%) difference year on year of the overall cost of running a Hackney Carriage vehicle. The Committee were told that although the % difference in the calculation for this year showed an overall drop of 3.2% in the cost of running a Hackney Carriage vehicle, in previous years when the % difference showed large increases, fares were not increased in line. This meant that as far as the trade were concerned, the fare/costs margins had dropped. The trade suggested that more investment was needed, especially given that the standards required of Manchester Hackney Carriage vehicles are higher than those expected in surrounding boroughs, meaning that the costs associated with maintaining a Hackney Carriage vehicle are higher in Manchester than in neighbouring areas. The trade requested that this be considered when deciding whether to increase fares or not.

The Committee commented that recent cases where Hackney Carriage vehicle proprietor licences had been revoked due to repeated failures of regular condition checks had invariably resulted in the purchase of a new Hackney Carriage vehicle by proprietors, at costs in excess of £34,000. The Committee were of the opinion that this indicated that there was sufficient funding and investment in the trade overall, and that no fare increases were necessary.

Decision

To recommend to the Executive that no changes are made to the Hackney Carriage fare for July 2016 to July 2017.