

## **Licensing Committee**

**7 NOVEMBER 2016**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Brandis (Chairman); Councillors M Hawkett (Vice-Chairman), A Bond (In place of T Mills), A Huxley, S Lambert, G Powell and Sir Beville Stanier Bt (ex-Officio)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors P Cooper, A Harrison, S Renshell and B Russel

### **1. TEMPORARY CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr A Bond substituted for Cllr T Mills

### **2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2016 be approved as a correct record.

### **3. CREATING A RURAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF**

It was reported that the present tariff for Hackney Carriage fares had been set by the Licensing Committee in April 2010. Despite year on year increases in vehicle insurance costs to the trade there had been no requests for an increase in fares by either the Aylesbury Vale Hackney Carriage Association or the Rural Hackney Carriage Association since 2010.

The power for Local Authorities to set fares for hackney carriages came under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. In accordance with the Legislation, if local authorities wanted to vary the fares, a notice showing the proposed tariff had to be published in at least one newspaper for a period of not less than fourteen days and a copy of the notice needed to be kept for inspection at the local authority offices.

The Rural Hackney Carriage Association had proposed a new tariff be introduced specifically for the rural taxis. The rural taxis covered the whole of the Vale with the exception of Aylesbury Town where they were not permitted to ply for hire.

The rural taxis covered a very large area and could travel a significant distance to accommodate a journey that potentially could be quite short. The fare could only be started once the passenger was on board and many jobs resulted in “dead mileage”; travel to the customer’s home or start point and return mileage after the journey had been completed. An increase in fares would help to offset fuel costs involved in covering such a large area. The Association were proposing an increase in the incremental rates of the fare with the initial hire cost remaining the same. A breakdown of existing and proposed rural tariffs had been attached as an appendix to the report.

Hackney carriage proprietors had discretion to charge less than the amount shown on the meter and would exercise this discretion in order to ensure that short journeys were not unduly excessive. However, the committee noted that Aylesbury Vale continued to maintain one of the cheapest fares for an average 2 mile journey in comparison to other authorities’ tariffs. A table showing these tariffs had also been attached as an appendix to the report.

Tariffs, once agreed, were calibrated on to the taxi meter, which automatically calculated the fare dependent on the journey distance, time of day and the other criteria. The tariff would be set within the meter and could not be altered by the driver.

It was also noted that the proposals would create a separate tariff for the Rural Hackney Carriage trade and would not change the tariff for the fifty Aylesbury town based hackney carriages.

Members sought clarification on and commented on the following:

- That the increases shown in the table of proposed charges were acceptable to the Rural Hackney Carriage Trade and were comparable to other Local Authority charges.
- That the proposed changes would result in a 2 tier system between the rural and urban hackney carriages.
- The areas where the urban and rural hackney carriages could ply for hire.
- The date of the next review of unmet need.
- The tariff structure – how 1/13 of a mile and 1/16 of a mile were arrived at.
- Aylesbury Vale's fares being amongst the cheapest in the country; at 359 out of 365 local authorities

RESOLVED –

1. That the Licensing Manager be authorised to conduct the statutory consultation in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976 in respect to the proposed new tariff as set in the appendix to the report.
2. That, if no objections are received, the Licensing Manager to progress the adoption of the new tariff for the rural zone in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Living who will make the final decision on adoption.
3. That, if any objections are received and not withdrawn, that they be reported to the Licensing Committee for further consideration.