

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Licensing Committee

15 February 2007 at 7.40pm

Present:

Councillor B M Brockwell (Chair)
Councillor B Clay (Vice-Chair)
Councillors B K Blake, S A Blake, A G Brown, R J Hull, B McCrow, B J Quinn,
L A Seekings and D J Shreeves

Officers Present:

Leo Nwoye.	Assistant Lawyer for Environment and Housing Directorate
Dave Packham	Licensing Officer
Madeleine Shopland	Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors B J Burgess, D C Crow, C C Lloyd, J L Millar-Smith
and C J Redmayne

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th November 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. Members' Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

13. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Fares 2007/08

The Committee considered report ES/181 of the Head of Environmental Services on Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Fares 2007/08.

The purpose of the report was to secure the Committee's agreement to the proposed revision of fees for hackney carriage and private hire driver, vehicle and operator licences.

The report detailed the statutory requirements relating to fees as set out in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The proposed fees for hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences and the fees charged for licences in 2006/07 were included as Appendix 1. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the proposed fees for

hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences and private hire operators' licences and what was currently charged for these licences.

It was noted that the private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licence fees were not required to go through the statutory consultation procedure, whilst, subject to the agreement of proposals by the Committee, the hackney carriage and private hire fees for vehicle and operators' licences would form the basis of the prescribed consultation process.

The level of fees recommended had been set on the basis of recovering the estimated cost of the service, as per legal requirements. The report indicated areas of ongoing costs.

The report also set out the consultation process and the financial implications of the proposed fee increase.

Concerns were expressed with regards to the proposed fee increase. Some Members felt that drivers might be unhappy with an increase in light of the continued problem of a number of drivers licensed outside the borough operating in the area. It was noted that this was an ongoing issue. The Assistant Lawyer for the Environment and Housing Directorate emphasised that it was an enforcement issue. If these drivers were reported, the Council's legal team were able to pursue prosecution where necessary. The Licensing Officer reminded the Committee of the successful prosecution in November 2006 of a driver licensed by another authority who had been caught plying for hire in the Crawley area. Some Members commented that they wished to see an increase in the level of enforcement.

A number of Members were of the view that the proposed increase was minimal. The Committee agreed that their primary concern was the safety of residents who used the vehicles.

In response to Members' queries about the number of drivers licensed by the Council, the Licensing Officer informed the Committee that there were currently 97 hackney carriages licensed.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the proposed vehicle and operator fees as set in Appendix 2 to report ES/181 be agreed for purposes of consultation.
- (2) To adopt the fees as laid out in Appendices 1 and 2 to report ES/181 from 1st April 2007 if no representations are made within the statutory 28 day consultation period.

14. Closure of Meeting

Members were reminded of the meeting of the Environment and Housing PDF on Wednesday 28th February at 6pm to discuss the issue of taxi signage, to which members of the Licensing Committee were invited.

With the business of the Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.55p.m.

B M BROCKWELL
Chair