

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Monday, 20 June 2022 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

I T Irvine (Chair)

Z Ali (Vice-Chair)

S Buck, B J Burgess, K L Jaggard, M G Jones, A Nawaz, K McCarthy, M Morris, C J Mullins,
B Noyce and D M Peck

Officers Present:

Dan Carberry	Public Protection and Enforcement Manager
Kareen Plympton	Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader
Jess Tamplin	Democratic Services Officer
Astrid Williams	Senior Lawyer (Solicitor)
Kate Wilson	Head of Community Services

Also in Attendance:

Councillor R D Burrett

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors M L Ayling, J Bounds and J Hart

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

Councillors Ali, Burgess, Jaggard, Jones, McCarthy, Mullins, Nawaz, and Peck confirmed that they had received some form(s) of lobbying in respect of agenda item 5 – Hackney Carriage Fares 2022 – 2023.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 1 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

4. Hackney Carriage Fares 2022 - 2023

The Committee considered report [HCS/42](#) of the Head of Community Services, which set out a proposal to vary the fares charged by hackney carriages in Crawley. The Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader presented the report and summarised the various increases in the fares, which were proposed to become the new maximum chargeable rates.

The Committee was requested to consider the approval of the proposed fare card with one amendment – the removal of tariff 2(e). This tariff was a duplication of tariff 4 and was included in error.

The Committee Chair invited Mr Amir Bhatti, the Chair of Crawley Hackney Carriage Association (CHCA), to speak on the item. Matters raised included:

- The last fare review was prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, in September 2019, so was overdue.
- An increase in the fares would assist licensed drivers in covering their expenses in light of the recent fuel price rises.
- The proposed fares would allow drivers to better handle rises in the cost of living.

The Committee then discussed the matter. In response to a query, the Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader explained that on this occasion the fare increase was initiated by the CHCA, not the Council. There was however an intention for the two organisations to reinstate annual discussions regarding fares each September, for implementation in December, as was the case prior to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader clarified that some hackney carriage drivers also worked with private hire operators, and in these instances a journey may be unmetered and a fare agreed upon with the passenger in advance, however the charge should not be higher than set out in the fare card. It was noted that private hire vehicle fares were a separate matter and the Council was not responsible for setting these rates.

It was highlighted that the Licensing service was self-funding. Any time staff spent working on this proposal was therefore accounted for by incomings to the department – this included the oversight of fitting meters used to charge the new fares. The cost of installation of the meters fell to individual drivers.

The Committee discussed the £5 charge at the Gatwick Airport passenger drop-off area. It was clarified that this charge applied to any hackney carriage providers using the drop-off, but that this was usually passed on to the passenger as part of the total travel charge. The Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader confirmed that meetings had taken place with Gatwick Airport to try to negotiate a lower drop-off charge for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, but thus far, requests had been denied by Gatwick Airport. These discussions were to continue.

A number of Committee members expressed agreement with the proposed increase in fares and emphasised support for Crawley's hackney carriage drivers. It was recognised that consultation with drivers had been successful and the result was a proposed fare card that was reasonable and fair.

The Committee agreed to amend the proposed fare card by removing tariff 2(e).

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- 1) Revises the wording of the fare card to make it easier for both drivers and the travelling public to understand.
- 2) Approves the table of fares put forward by the Chairman of the Crawley Hackney Carriage Association (on behalf of its members) as set out in Appendix C to report HCS/42 and as amended by the Committee.
- 3) Authorises the Head of Community Services to publish a public notice of the variation agreed upon and the period within which objections can be made in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Licensing Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.29 pm

I T Irvine (Chair)