

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

FRIDAY, 27TH APRIL 2012 (10.30AM)

Present:

Councillors: J Baker (Chairman), P B Harrison (Vice-Chairman), R Bishop, A J Buckley, J Greener, I Hardiman, P V Hayward, V Higgs, M B Kelly, M Price and M A Salter.

Observers

There were no members present as observers.

LIC.56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A T Hingley.

LIC.57 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor I Hardiman was appointed as a substitute for Councillor A T Hingley.

LIC.58 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

LIC.59 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

LIC.60 Increase of Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Licensing Fees and Charges for 2012/2013

A report was considered from the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services on behalf of Wyre Forest District Council relating to an objection received by the Licensing Office on the proposed increase in Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Licensing Fees and Charges for 2012 / 2013.

The Licensing Officer led Members through the report and advised that recent changes to the Council's internal financial procedures resulted in a projected surplus for the year, however Members were advised that in previous years a deficit had been reported and year on year the cost of the service would be self financing and not run at a loss.

The Chairman invited the objector, Mr Alton from Bewdley Taxi Association, to address the Committee. Mr Alton referred to an article in a Private Hire Trade

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magazine which detailed a table of fees for other authorities and stated the fees in Wyre Forest were considerably higher than neighbouring Districts.

Members noted that without a breakdown of the costs the comparative figures were meaningless as there were no details of the number of licensed vehicles in the areas or an indication of whether the services were subsidised in any way. A like for like comparison could not be made.

Mr Alton and the Licensing Officer left the meeting at this point (10.51am), whilst the Committee reached their decision, and returned to the meeting at 10.55am.

Agreed:

The increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence fees and charges by 5% as set out in the Council's 2012/2013 budget strategy be endorsed.

LIC.61 Hackney Carriage Fare Increase Request

A report was considered from the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services on behalf of Wyre Forest District Council following a request for an increase to the current Wyre Forest Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff.

The Licensing Officer led Members through the report and explained the options put forward by the Bewdley Taxi Association and representatives of the Wyre Forest Taxi Liaison Group as detailed at Appendix 3 on page 19 of the report to the Licensing and Environmental Committee. The Committee were advised that the proposed fares would be the maximum charges for hackney carriage fares, drivers could choose to charge less if they desired.

The Licensing Officer referred the Committee to a national average fare league table which had recently been published in the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication, the table listed 363 areas showing the national average fare as £5.02, Wyre Forest were listed at 332 in the table with an average fare of £4.60.

Mr Alton asked the Committee to consider the increase request as fares had remained the same for the last four years.

Mr Alton and the Licensing Officer left the meeting at this point (11.14am), whilst the Committee reached their decision, and returned to the meeting at 11.22am.

Agreed:

The current Wyre Forest Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff be increased as set out in Option 3 on page 11 of the report to the Licensing and Environmental Committee of 27th April 2012.

- **Increase the flag fare to £2.70 for 1st ½ mile plus an increase of 5p for every mile thereafter.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 11.25am.