

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 04 March 2020 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cllr D A Flagg – Chairman  
Cllr G Farquhar – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr S Baron, Cllr D Butler, Cllr J J Butt, Cllr N Decent, Cllr B Dion,  
Cllr D Farr, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr P Parrish,  
Cllr P Broadhead (In place of Cllr B Dove) and Cllr T Trent (In place  
of Cllr R Burton)

23. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Burton and Cllr B Dove.

24. Substitute Members

Notification was received from the nominated representatives of the relevant Political Group Leaders that Cllr T Trent was substituting for Cllr R Burton and Cllr P Broadhead was substituting for Cllr B Dove for this meeting of the Committee.

25. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

26. Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee on 18 December 2019, and the Licensing Sub Committees on 19 December 2019, 14, 21 and 28 January, and 4 February 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:**

Licensing Sub Committee, 28 January 2020 – amend attendance list to read Cllr G Farquhar

Licensing Sub Committee, 21 January 2020 – amend attendance list to include Cllr D Butler present as reserve.

27. Public Issues

There were no formal statements, public questions or petitions submitted to this meeting.

Mr Kevin Diffey and Mr David Lane, representing the Taxi Trade, addressed the Committee to present the Trade's proposals for hackney

carriage fares for 2020/21, as part of Agenda Item 6: Review of Hackney Carriage Fares.

28. Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

The Licensing Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Licensing Authority had received a request from the Taxi Trade for a review of the hackney carriage fare structure for the BCP Council area for 2020/21. In summary, the Trade was seeking a 1.4% increase in proposed fares and a reduction in waiting time from 45 to 40 seconds. The Committee was also asked to consider current limit in the maximum extras that can be charged and the soilage rate for cleaning the vehicle. Subject to the Committee's decision an approved formula would be used by the Licensing Authority to calculate the new tariff chart once the necessary details were provided by the Trade.

Mr Kevin Diffey addressed the Committee on behalf of the Taxi Trade to explain the reasons for its request. The proposed fare increase was based on figures published each January and took into account increases in vehicle running costs (0.4%), the consumer index rate (1.4%), the service provider index (1.6%), and the national living wage (6.2%). The reduction in the time allocated for 20 pence increments had not been adjusted in recent years, but Mr Diffey explained that drivers were now unable to undertake as many journeys as in previous years, due to increased traffic congestion across the conurbation. The request to increase the number of clicks for extras was to take into account the number of larger vehicles which could take up to 8 passengers.

Mr Diffey provided the following information in response to questions from the Committee, with clarification provided by the Licensing Manager as required:

- The AA calculated that the cost of running a vehicle had gone up by 0.4%
- Although there was no requirement for the Trade to consult direct with its customers, there was an opportunity to provide feedback to the Licensing Authority when the formal notice of proposed fares was published, Should any objections be received the matter would come back to the Committee for further consideration.
- In keeping the proposed fare increase low at 1.4% the Trade had been mindful of recent increases implemented in the Christchurch Zone to achieve harmonisation of fees.
- BCP taxi fares were traditionally quite high compared to other local authorities (the proposed increase would result in BCP being 14 out of 175). In terms of comparable authorities BCP fares were higher than Bristol but lower than Brighton and Hove. It was noted that there were discrepancies in the fares published in Private Hire and

Taxi Monthly as fares could be increased at different times of the year.

- The charge for additional luggage in a larger vehicle was applied at £1.00 for each extra item, in the form of a large suitcase or equivalent. It was explained that larger vehicles were more expensive to operate.
- Although calculated in slightly different ways the Committee was assured that resulting fares were the same for customers across the BCP area.
- It may not be financially viable for some drivers to continue in the job if the proposed fares were not approved.

There was also a discussion about the use of electric vehicles and hybrids, and the possibility of installing charging points at taxi ranks.

Having considered the report and the representation from Mr Diffey on behalf of the Taxi Trade, Committee members felt that the proposals were fair and reasonable.

**RESOLVED that the request by the Taxi Trade for an adjustment to the Hackney Carriage Maximum Fares and Charges tariff 2020/21 as set out in the report and detailed by the representative of the Taxi Trade at the meeting be approved**

Voting: Unanimous

29. Taxi and Private Hire policy harmonisation

The Licensing Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

There were currently three legacy taxi and private hire policies covering the BCP Council area, which were all different and in need of updating. In order to properly protect passengers and other road users it was proposed to create one new 'fit for purpose' BCP taxi and private hire policy for the Council to use in its operation and decision making. The Committee was asked to consider how it wished to input into the development of the policy.

The Licensing Manager explained that it was intended to separate this work into three main categories, for drivers, vehicles and operators, with each category having its own bespoke policy which would be reviewed every five years. It was noted that the fees charged for the administration of this service would also be harmonised and reviewed under a separate report at a later date to coincide with the implementation of the new policies.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful to set up a working party of councillors to work with Officers and the Taxi Trade to help formulate the policy. The Committee talked about the need to set parameters for the working group including an end date from which to work back from. The Licensing Manager advised that the final policy was intended to be in place by the end of November 2020. She explained that some preparatory work

was already underway, including discussions with the Taxi Trade. It was noted that relevant taxi legislation and guidance would have considerable bearing on what the new policy looked like. It was anticipated that the work would take around four months, including a period of public consultation, and that a timetable for adoption by full Council would need to be factored in.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to include a cross section of Committee members in the working group, ideally with a mix of experienced and new members from across the Council area. The Committee felt that no more than five members was an expedient number for this type of work.

**RESOLVED that the new Taxi and Private Hire policy documents be drafted as detailed in the report and a Working Party be established to help formulate the policy, with a membership of Cllrs J Butt, G Farquhar, D Flagg, T Johnson and D Kelsey.**

Voting: Unanimous

30. Venue for future meetings

The Committee was advised that the Council at its meeting on 17 December 2019 agreed the dates for meetings of the Committee and its Sub Committees for the Municipal Year 2020/21. In doing so it was proposed that each Committee consider the venue(s) for its meetings from May 2020 onwards.

The Committee agreed that it was happy to continue with its current arrangements of rotating the location for its meetings and those of its Sub Committees between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole on a monthly basis.

**RESOLVED that the location of future meetings of the Licensing Committee and its Sub-Committees be rotated between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole on a monthly basis**

Voting: Unanimous

31. Any Other Business

**Unmet Needs Survey**

The Licensing Manager reported that a survey of unmet needs in relation to the Taxi Trade was about to be published on the Council's website. This would assist in shaping the new BCP Taxi and Private Hire Policy. She wished to raise awareness of this work in the context of developing the new policy and agreed to circulate a copy of the survey to Committee members.

### **Road Closure at Horseshoe Common, Bournemouth**

Mr Kevin Diffey, on behalf of the Taxi Trade, wished to raise a number of concerns regarding the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which closed the road to traffic at Horseshoe Common between Midnight and 5.00am.

The Licensing Manager reported on known issues associated with the TRO since its introduction in 2015, including the rise in Facebook lift sites, Policing issues, and the demand for a taxi rank in the restricted area. Mr Diffey reported on additional issues including a discrepancy with the signage at each end of the road closure, drivers being unable to fulfil NHS contracts to pick up clients within the restricted area, safety issues, buses, passenger frustrations, and the impact on trade.

The Committee discussed the issues raised and agreed that it was not possible to consider these in isolation. As it was not within the Committee's remit to amend the TRO it was suggested that a meeting be facilitated between the Taxi Trade and the Portfolio Holder to discuss the best way forward. The Committee could also include this issue as a future agenda item to hear from all parties involved before taking a view.

### **Record of Thanks to Mr Frank Wenzel and Mr Sean Whitney**

The Committee was advised that two long serving members of staff in the Licensing team were leaving the Council at the end of March, Mr Frank Wenzel, Licensing Manager, and Sean Whitney, Public Health and Protection Manager.

**RESOLVED that the Committee place on record its thanks to Mr Frank Wenzel and Mr Sean Whitney for their services to the Council and its preceding authorities.**

Voting: Unanimous

The Chairman agreed to take the above items under any other business in order to keep the Committee apprised of current issues.

The meeting ended at 10.54 am

CHAIRMAN