

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 September 2022 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cllr J J Butt – Chairman

Cllr D Kelsey – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr S C Anderson, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr M Howell, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr A Filer (In place of Cllr L Williams), Cllr P Hilliard (In place of Cllr D A Flagg), Cllr L Northover (In place of Cllr K Wilson), Cllr M Iyengar (In place of Cllr J Bagwell) and Cllr B Dion (In place of Cllr N Decent)

29. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Bagwell, N Decent, D Flagg, L Williams, K Wilson

30. Substitute Members

Cllr M Iyengar substituted for Cllr J Bagwell, Cllr B Dion for Cllr N Decent, Cllr P Hilliard for Cllr D Flagg, Cllr A Filer for Cllr L Williams, Cllr L Northover for Cllr K Wilson.

31. Election of Chair

The Chairman of the Council presided over this item and sought nominations for Chair. A nomination was received and seconded for Cllr J Butt. No further nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Cllr J Butt be elected Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

32. Election of Vice Chair

The Chair sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Nominations were received and seconded for Cllr J Bagwell and Cllr D Brown. Following a secret ballot, it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr J Bagwell be elected Vice-Chair for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Note: This was later declared invalid as Cllr Bagwell was being substituted for this meeting and therefore not eligible for nomination as Vice-Chair.

33. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests made.

34. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 10 March 2022 and the minutes of Licensing Sub Committee meetings held on 2, 16 and 30 March, 27 and 28 April, 11 and 26 May, 8 June, 6, 19 and 20 July, and 3 and 17 August 2022.

35. Public Issues

There were no public issues.

36. Review of the Hackney Carriage maximum fares and charges

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 Manager advised that a request has been received by Mr David Lane on behalf of BCP Taxi and Private Hire Association for a 6% increase on the current Hackney Carriage Tariff. It was noted that any change in the tariff would be reflected across all three current Hackney Carriage zones within BCP Council conurbation. The Committee were asked to consider the request and consider whether it should be approved, approved with amendments, or refused.

The Committee invited Mr Lane to address the Committee on behalf of the association and give the reasons for the requested increase originally submitted on. A number of issues were outlined to the Committee which included:

- The exponential rise in the cost of fuel for drivers, which reflected a 12.5 percent increase in drivers expenses. The cost of fuel was 35 pence a litre more than at the beginning of the year.
- Drivers needed to return to ranks, increasing the number of miles travelled
- General cost of living increases facing both the general public and drivers
- The 6 percent increase being requested would only be covering the increase in costs occurred by drivers

A number of issues were raised by members in discussing the request, including:

Whether it would be possible to revert to lower charges should the current high prices reduce in future. It was explained that there was a cost to drivers in changing the meter and therefore the most likely scenario would be that a further increase would not be requested until the effects had been worked through.

That the previous request was only for a 6 percent increase and whether the current request would actually be enough. In the present climate the Committee was advised that it was difficult to know but it was also

important not to increase fares by too much as taxis would need to remain a viable transport option.

Whether the increase could be weighted towards night-time usage to lessen the effect towards those who used taxis for essential purposes. In relation to this a committee member asked whether a lot of shift workers or those supporting the night-time economy would be impacted by a weighted increase. It was explained that it would be difficult to regulate prices dependent upon the time of day. The Chairman commented that many different groups used the service, and it was important that it was fiscally able to continue. However, it was not felt to be appropriate to ask the trade to come back with new submissions.

The number of vehicles which were electric or hybrid and therefore less effected by fuel price increases. It was confirmed that the Licensing Service were not aware of any fully electric vehicles but there were a number of hybrid vehicles. However, it was not just the impact of fuel costs which would be affecting them, there was also an increase to licence fees coming up as well as general living and electricity costs.

It was confirmed that this was only in relation to Hackney Carriages, although there may be an indirect effect to other licensed vehicles.

(Cllr G Farquhar left the meeting)

Licensing Officers were asked if the committee had ability to set a rise for a specific time period. It was noted that there were difficulties with this as previously discussed including the cost of setting metres. It was noted that the Licensing team and trade meet regularly and a potential solution could be to place the issue on the Committees Forward plan for future meeting to look at again. However, the decision rested solely with Council to make this change.

A Committee member moved that an amendment be made to the requested increase, that it should be accepted for a limited time period between 1 November to 30 April and would then automatically revert back to the current rates or it would be open to a review from the trade at any point during this period. The move was duly seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 11.06am and resumed 11.25am

The amendment put forward was debated by the Committee. It was noted that whilst the amendment was well-minded the automatic reduction would incur a cost to the trade. Concerns were also raised regarding continuity.

The motion was put to the vote. There were 2 votes in favour and 11 against.

2 in favour 11 against of amendment

A Committee member then moved that the requested adjustment in current fares and charges be accepted. This was seconded and following a vote it was:

RESOVLED: That the requested adjustment be accepted.

Voting: 11 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions

(Cllr A Filer left the meeting)

37. Election of Vice-Chair

Following advice from the monitoring officer the election for Vice-Chair was ruled invalid as Cllr Bagwell was being substituted at the time and was therefore not a member of the Committee and not eligible for nomination.

The Committee was advised that the options to rectify the situation was for the meeting to either agree that the other nominee Cllr D Brown be elected Vice-Chair, that new nominations be sought and a second secret ballot held if required, or that the meeting be adjourned to a future date to defer the issue (due to a member having left the meeting). The recommendation from the Monitoring Officer was that the election of Vice-Chair be reconsidered and the ballot rerun.

The meeting agreed to first consider if Cllr D Brown should be Vice-Chair. A recorded vote on whether Cllr D Brown should assume the position of Vice-Chair was requested. The voting was as follows:

Those for the motion: Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr M Howell and Cllr L Northover

Those against the motion: Cllr J Butt, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr S Anderson, Cllr B Dion, Cllr D Farr, Cllr T Johnson and Cllr D Kelsey.

The vote was lost and the Chair then sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Nominations were received and seconded for Cllr D Kelsey and Cllr D Brown. Following a secret ballot it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr D Kelsey be elected Vice-Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal year.

A number of Councillors raised their concerns that proper procedure had not been followed and that some considered that the second vote for the position of Vice-Chairman was unlawful.

38. Forward Plan

The Chairman requested that the Licensing Manager take the Committee through the Forward Plan. The Chairman outlined those items which had been requested and which were currently scheduled on the Forward Plan.

(Cllr S Anderson left the meeting).

A Committee member suggested that an item to review the pricing mechanism for licensed vehicles be added to the plan. The Licensing Manager advised that this would be added to the plan for potentially the meetings in either March or May next year depending on the financial climate.

At the next meeting it was anticipated that there would be an additional item which had come up over the next few weeks which would be a review of the taxi fees and charges.

Officers had been assessing provision and positioning of taxi ranks and will need to meet with highways before bringing this to Committee in March
An unmet need report would also be coming through in March.

In March there would also need to be a review of wheelchair accessibility. It was noted that it was becoming difficult to pre-book wheelchair accessible journeys. It was suggested that a working party may be needed to look at all the options with regards to this. The Chairman asked all those interested in taking part in the working party to contact the Chair.

The Committee agreed to support the current Forward Plan

Chair reminded all members for the effective running of the Sub-Committee, that members needed to be mindful of the Sub-Committee rota and to provide apologies for any allocated to, as either a member or a reserve, if unable to attend. In relation to this, Cllr Brown offered apologies for all future sub-committees due to his concerns on the legality of the election of Vice-Chair and the proper running of meetings.

The meeting ended at 12.13 pm

CHAIRMAN