
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE, 09.09.19

Present: Councillors Steve Collings, Annwen Hughes, Gareth Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Edgar Wyn Owen, Dafydd Owen, Roy Owen, Jason Wayne Parry, Angela Russell, Elfed W. Williams (Chair) and Gareth Williams

Also in Attendance: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head - Planning and Environment), Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager), and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

Others invited: Councillor Gareth Griffiths, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies was received from Councillors John Brynmor Hughes and Peter Read

Councillor W. Roy Owen was welcomed as a new member of Central Licensing Committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of a meeting of this Committee, that took place on 3 June 2019, as a true record.

5. MINUTES OF THE GENERAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Submitted - for information, the minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Sub-committee that took place on 03.06.19 and 20.06.19

6. MAXIMUM HACKNEY CARRIAGE TAXI FARES

Submitted – a report by the Head of the Environment Department asking the Committee to approve the proposal from the taxi industry to review the maximum fee that may be charged for journeys in a hackney carriage in the County. It was highlighted that it was a requirement that any application to change the maximum fee should be submitted by the industry, and it was confirmed that a recent application to review fees had been submitted by Mr J Pritchard, owner of a local taxi company. It was added that no application to review the maximum fee had been received since 2011, and it was stressed that the maximum fee was not applicable to journeys in private hire vehicles.

Reference was made to a table in the report that compared matching fares for a two mile journey. It was noted that the proposed increase had been calculated by adding inflation at an average of 2.6% per annum, to the journey fare per mile specified in 2011. It was suggested within the industry that it was journey fares that drove competition and it was stated that it was unlikely that every company would raise their fares.

At a meeting of the General Licensing Committee on the 11th of April 2019, it was determined to accept the proposal to increase the maximum fare that could be charged for a journey in a hackney vehicle in accordance with the recommendation; subject to statutory public consultation. It was reported that a public consultation had taken place and four responses had been received from individuals within the taxi industry, and from one member of the public. It was added that the proposed maximum fare did not come into force following the consultation due to the fact that responses had been received to the consultation. Reference was made to the responses that had been included in the report for the Committee to consider prior to coming to a final decision on the maximum fare.

Members expressed their thanks for the report and the proposal to set the maximum fare was welcomed.

One member noted that he agreed with the proposal to setting the first mile at £3.60 and then 30p for each part of the following 10 miles as otherwise it would be complex to set the taxi meter. In response to one of the responses regarding that the fee for soiling a taxi was too low (£45) and consideration should be given to increasing it to at least £70, it was argued that it was possible to pay £40 for cleaning a car locally, therefore an increase to £70 was considered excessive. The Licensing Manager stated that if the Committee approved the proposal to charge the maximum, then the cleaning fee would remain at £45.

In response to a comment that companies in rural areas as well as urban/city areas should be treated fairly, it was accepted that it was difficult to get access to services in the countryside, but there was no necessity for companies to raise their fares - it was a maximum that was being set. It was noted that it would be possible for companies to respond better to competition with this freedom.

A further comment was made that the Gwynedd proposed maximum fare continued to be competitive with the maximum fares of the other north Wales Counties and that this was to be welcomed.

IT WAS RESOLVED, HAVING CONSIDERED THE RESPONSES RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD, TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM FARE THE TAXI INDUSTRY MAY CHARGE FOR JOURNEYS IN HACKNEY VEHICLES WITHIN THE COUNTY.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 10.20am