

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

Meeting held 29 January 2013

PRESENT: Councillors John Robson (Chair), Neale Gibson, George Lindars-Hammond, Ian Saunders, Clive Skelton (Deputy Chair), Geoff Smith and Philip Wood

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nikki Bond, Nikki Sharpe and Stuart Wattam.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Committee held on 25th October and 8th November 2012, and the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 16th, 18th, 22nd and 30th October, 5th, 12th, 19th, 20th, 26th and 29th November, and 3rd, 4th and 6th December 2012, were approved as correct records.

5. PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING - HACKNEY CARRIAGES FARES REVIEW (DETERMINATION OF FARES)

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Licensing Officer reviewing the fare structure and tariffs for Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council. The Committee, at its meeting held on 8th November 2012, had deferred making a decision on this matter to enable the taxi trades to provide documentary written evidence of overall running costs to drivers and mile by mile costs of running a licensed Hackney Carriage, including details regarding insurance, fuel, road tax and license fee costs.

5.2 In attendance were Clive Stephenson, Principal Licensing Officer, and Hafeas Rehman and Zulfiqar Ahmed Sheffield Taxi Trade Association (STTA).

5.3 Hafeas Rehman (STTA) stated that, in the light of rises in the costs of road tax, fuel and insurance, it was reasonable that the Association should request an increase in fares. Mr Rehman confirmed that the

Association had not provided any evidence with regard to running costs to drivers, as had been requested, other than submitting a letter from Avant Garde, Insurance Brokers, setting out details of the percentage increases in taxi insurance since 2009.

5.4 Clive Stephenson, Principal Licensing Officer, provided details of a rough calculation in terms of overall running costs to drivers, based on two models of Hackney Carriages.

5.5 In response to questions from Members of the Committee, it was reported that it would cost approximately £20 for each driver to have their meter reprogrammed if a decision was taken to increase fares, and confirmed that the last fare increase had been made in October 2011, when they had been increased by 4%.

5.6 **RESOLVED:** That the public and press and attendees be excluded from the meeting before further discussion takes place on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in Paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

5.7 The Solicitor to the Sub-Committee reported orally, giving legal advice on various aspects of the report.

5.8 At this stage in the proceedings, the meeting was re-opened to the public and press and attendees.

5.9 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:-

(a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the representations now made; and

(b) agrees that, in the light of (i) the lack of documentary evidence from the Sheffield Taxi Trades Association of the overall running costs of Hackney Carriage drivers and (ii) the difficulties being faced by members of the public due to the present economic climate, there should be no increase in Hackney Carriage fares at this time.

6. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - DELIVERING THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES TO CUT ALCOHOL FUELLED CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

6.1 The Chief Licensing Officer submitted a report informing Members of a consultation paper released by the Home Office - 'Delivering the Government's Policies to Cut Alcohol Fuelled Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour'. The report contained, at Appendix 'A', a draft response from the Licensing Authority and the views of Members were sought on the contents of the draft response.

- 6.2 In attendance for this item was Claire Bower, Principal Licensing Officer.
- 6.3 Members raised their concerns with regard to the lack of detail on the response form, as well as the lack of opportunity provided for the Licensing Authority to provide detailed responses to the questions raised as part of the consultation.
- 6.4 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:-
- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted;
 - (b) requests that a letter, to be signed by the Chair of the Committee, be sent to the Home Office, expressing the concerns now raised with regard to the lack of detail on the response form, and that copies of the letter be forwarded to the Sheffield Members of Parliament; and
 - (c) agrees that the proposed response from the Licensing Authority to the consultation paper “delivering the Government’s Policies to Cut Alcohol Fuelled Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour”, as set out in Appendix “A” to the report now submitted, be sent to the Home Office, subject to the following amendments:-
 - (i) the response to Question 7 – Should other factors or evidence be considered when considering a ban on multi-buy promotions? – be amended from ‘No’ to ‘Don’t know’; and
 - (ii) the response to Question 21 – Do you think that the following proposals would impact adversely on one or more of the licensing objectives? – be amended from ‘No’ to ‘Yes’.