

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Taxis Committee
Wednesday 6th April 2022 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor A Hopwood (Chair)
Councillor K Lewis (Vice-Chair)
Councillors A Aston, M Aston, I Bevan, B Challenor and D Harley

Officers:

S Smith (Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement)), N Slym (Assistant Team Manager), N Bangar (Solicitor) and K Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in Attendance:

Mr M Ali (Dudley Taxi and Private Hire Association) for Agenda Item No. 5 – Review of Hackney Carriage Fares.

65 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Body, P Drake and E Lawrence.

66 **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor A Aston had been appointed as substitute Member for Councillor P Drake for this meeting of the Committee only.

67 **Declarations of interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter considered at the meeting.

68 **Minutes**

Resolved



That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

69 **Review of Hackney Carriage Fares**

A report of the Deputy Chief Executive was submitted on the application for the increase in hackney carriage fares submitted by Mr Ali on behalf of the Dudley Taxi and Private Hire Association who represent a number of both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers licensed by Dudley Council.

The Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) presented the report in detail, and in doing so, outlined comparative data for an average two-mile hackney fare by neighbouring authorities, against the national average of £6.17. It was noted that Dudley currently charged £5.60 for an average two-mile journey as agreed in 2011.

The current table of fares was attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted and the suggested rates proposed by the Dudley Taxi and Private Hire Association were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Mr Ali on behalf of the Dudley Taxi and Private Hire Association referred to the low and competitive rates offered by Dudley in comparison to neighbouring authorities which were also being reviewed. It was considered that factors such as waiting time per hour, which had been agreed in 2006, should be reviewed in order to adapt to increasing demand and national challenges, including rising fuel costs. Mr Ali further commented on the ongoing significant reduction in hackney carriage drivers which was expected to cause further difficulties for customers and residents of Dudley, in particular, wheelchair accessibility.

At this juncture, the Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) provided a summary of the legislation in relation to Hackney Carriage fare charging.

Resolved

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, an increase in the fares charged for the hiring of hackney carriages, be approved as set out below:-

Fares for Distance or Time Commencing after 6.00 or 23.00	Day Time Rate 6.00 to 23.00 (Tariff 1)	Night Time Rate 23.00 to 6.00 (Tariff 2)	Tariff 3
To Hire this Taxi	£2.00	£2.50	Christmas and New Year Rate From 6pm on 24 th December to 6am on 27 th December; and from 6pm on 31 st December to Midnight on 1 January
Up to First Mile	£4.80	£5.30	
For each Mile thereafter	£1.80	£1.80	
Waiting Time Per 1 Minute	25p	25p	£3.00 start rate and first mile £8.60
Per Hour	£15.00	£15.00	
Price Guide			Extras
Up to 1 Mile	£4.80	£5.30	All Other Bank Holidays + Sundays (+ 50P TARIFF 2)
2 miles	£6.60	£7.10	
3 miles	£8.40	£8.90	Booking/Extra Passenger charge Telephone Bookings only £2.00
5 miles	£12.00	£12.50	
10 miles	£21.00	£21.50	
Soiling Charge	Up to £50.00	Up to £50.00	

70 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual(s) as defined under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

71 Change in Order of Business

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was:

Resolved

That the order of business be varied, and the agenda items considered in the order set out in the minutes below.

72 Application for Grant of Exemptions on a Private Hire Vehicle Licence – Mr MP



A report of the Deputy Chief Executive was submitted to consider an application made on behalf of Mr MP for the grant of an exemption on the private hire vehicle licence operated under the operator's licence for his organisation.

Mr MP was in attendance at the meeting together with a supporter and responded to questions asked by the Committee.

Mr MP stated that his company would provide a bespoke limousine driving service, and due to the nature of the service to be provided, he had made the application for the special dispensation with regards to the door signage, roof sign and plate in respect of the vehicle. Mr MP also confirmed that he would not be accepting private hire bookings and that he was satisfied with displaying an identification plate to be fixed in a prominent position inside his vehicle.

Resolved

That, subject to an identification plate to be fixed in a prominent position inside the vehicle, an exemption on the Private Hire Vehicle Licence issued to Mr MP operated under the operator's licence for his company, be granted..

73 **Review of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence – Mr FS**

A report of the Deputy Chief Executive was submitted to consider the review of the private hire and hackney carriage driver's licence issued to Mr FS.

Mr FS was in attendance at the meeting together with two witnesses, Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Cox and PCSO Copson.

It was noted that on 9th December, 2021, the Committee determined that the application be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee in view of the paperwork submitted being incomplete, in that the transcript from the interview attended by Mr FS, together with statements and supporting evidence from West Midlands Police had been omitted. The Team Manager (Licensing and Waste Enforcement) confirmed that all completed paperwork had now been disclosed to all parties in order to consider the application for review.

Following the presentation of the report submitted, all parties confirmed that the content of the report was a true reflection of the incident on 19th June, 2021. It was noted that additional evidence had been provided to all parties prior to the hearing, which had been relevant to the case.

The witnesses, PCSO's Cox and Copson responded to a series of questions asked by the Committee in relation to the incident.

Mr FS responded to questions asked by the Committee and indicated that he was not aware of the speed that he was travelling as he did not look at his speedometer and judged his speed by the feel of the vehicle and acknowledged that he would have been unable to stop the vehicle safely in an emergency and offered no explanation for driving at the speed that he was. He did however dispute the claim that there was no vehicle plate in the back of his window.



The Committee were informed that there were no further matters pending that needed to be brought to their attention.

The Solicitor provided a legal summary in relation to the case, following which all parties withdrew from the meeting to enable the Committee to determine the review.

Resolved

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, and as reported at the meeting, the Committee were of the view that the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver's Licences issued to Mr FS be revoked under section 61(1) (b) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Act 1976, as the Committee determined that Mr FS by virtue of his driving conduct was no longer a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Mr FS was informed of his right to appeal the decision of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm.

CHAIR

