

Minutes of a special meeting of the **LICENSING COMMITTEE (AND COMMITTEE OF THE LICENSING AUTHORITY)** held in Meeting Room One, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding on Thursday 29 June 2006.

PRESENT

Councillors:

M R Taylor Vice-Chairman  
S F Williams Chairman

J M Atkin  
M Bamber  
F Biggadike

T Bray  
G K Dark

P A Espin  
A Parker

The Head of Legal and Member Services, the Food Safety and Licensing Team Leader and the Licensing Officer.

In attendance: The Press.

66. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 January 2006 and 17 May 2006 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

67. **REVIEW OF TAXI FEES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community and Neighbourhood Services in respect of altering the fare and soiling charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

Concerns had been raised by the Spalding Taxi Forum and operators that there had not been any increases in the maximum charges since February 2002, despite there being increased operating costs such as the increased cost of fuel, maintenance costs and inspection fees. The current charges provided for a set call out charge of £2.00 but the first half mile was free and concern had been expressed that for short journeys it was not economically viable. The maximum permitted soiling charge was £40.00 and concern had also been raised that the cost of valeting the vehicle exceeded £40.00, with a risk of the vehicle having to be taken out of service for periods of time, when no income would be generated. It was noted that private hire vehicles were not bound by the fees. However, if a meter is fitted and used then the meter rates will apply.

If the fare and soiling fees were altered there would be an obligation for the Council to advertise the proposed increased fares and allow a 14 day objection period. If there were any objections within the 14 day period they would have to be referred to the Licensing Committee for consideration.

Alternative options open to the Committee were reported. The Spalding Taxi Forum and officers mainly preferred option one which would introduce a charge of 10p per  $\frac{1}{12}$  mile, where the meter would start running as soon as the vehicle commenced its journey. Effectively this would increase the cost of a journey by 60p, whatever the distance. The meter "start rate" would remain the same i.e. rate 1) £2.00, rate 2) £3.00 and rate 3) £4.00. Option one would also increase the soiling charge from £40.00 to £60.00.

The Chairman suggested that any fee increase at this point in time may be premature because of suggestion for mogo plating which, if introduced, would impose further costs on vehicle owners who might therefore feel that a further fee increase was justified. Mogo plating is a new type of license plate, used for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, which is more secure. The mogo plates will show the expiry date and the vehicle registration so that they cannot be swapped onto different vehicles and it will also contain a hologram which will be very difficult to copy.

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**68. REVIEW OF TAXI FEES (Continued)**

**DECISION:**

- (a) That approval of option one (introduction of charge of 10p per  $\frac{1}{12}$  mile from the start of all journeys and increase of soiling charge from £40.00 to £60.00) be agreed in principle, but not implemented at this point in time, as the Committee wished to consider the proposal for mogo plating first which could also impact on taxi fares and charges and it was considered appropriate to address all issue collectively rather than piecemeal.
- (b) That officers consult with the Spalding Taxi Forum to find out their views on mogo plating and the likely impact on fares and charges.
- (c) That another meeting of the Licensing Committee be arranged as soon as possible to consider mogo plating and fares and charges.

(Meeting ended at 7.20 pm.)

(End of minutes.)