

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held in the Mead Room - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Friday, 7 February 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor: Kathie Guthrie (Chair)
David Muller BA (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gerard Brewster Paul Ekpenyong
Penny Otton Stephen Phillips
Dr Daniel Pratt Andrew Stringer

In attendance:

Officers: John Grayling – Corporate Manager Public Protection
Kay Sanders – Licensing Officer
Nigel Dulieu – Legal Advisor
Karen Sayer – Governance Officer

Apologies:

Julie Flatman

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 MLR/19/1 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2019

It was RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2019 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

3 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

3.1 None received.

4 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

4.1 The Chair agreed to amend the order of the Agenda to include the following Questions which were tabled at the meeting.

Questions received from Cllr John Matthissen:

1. Will the council consider a taxi licensing regime offering incentives to upgrade vehicles to zero emissions?

Response:

When we review the license fee structure we can consider a discount for zero emission vehicles. There is a risk of challenge around which cost elements are included however and how we charge and manage the license accounts. The amount of work in processing a licence application for a regular vehicle versus an electric vehicle will be broadly the same, and the service must be cost neutral. If we charge more to a driver of a vehicle with a conventional engine than someone with an electric vehicle that will potentially open the council to challenge through the District Auditor. Considering the current price differentials between zero emission vehicles and conventional engines however, I don't think that this is going to create a genuine incentive. I'm not saying it wouldn't be appropriate to do but might only be a token and we are likely to be challenged successfully. Alternative incentives that we might consider could include free driver training or something else ancillary.

2. Will the council install electric vehicle charging points beside designated taxi ranks?

Response:

So far as installing charging points at taxi ranks is concerned, that opens a whole lot of logistical issues relating to land ownership and where the power would be routed from. It would also cause problems where we would expect a high rate of vehicle turnover. We are still working on installing charging points where we have control over the sites. Again, I agree that we need to be looking at this but perhaps not at the ranks themselves. It will need a fairly hefty capital budget once we are past the logistical problems.

The report of the findings of the climate emergency task force due in April should identify the places where the council will have most impact with the resources it has but there may well be other incremental actions that can be taken such as those you are suggesting. I will keep them in mind as we develop this work.

- 4.2 In the ensuing discussion, John Grayling - Corporate Manager agreed to pass Members' comments to the Environment Task and Finish Group and said the issue of providing incentives for taxis to be electric would be kept alive as an issue as we move forward with the climate emergency strategy which will come from the work that the Task and Finish Group are currently doing.

5 MLR/19/2 HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF FARES REVIEW

- 5.1 Kay Sanders, Licensing Officer presented Paper MLR/19/2 which included an updated Appendix B tabled at the meeting. The report referred to a review of the current table of fares fixed for hackney carriages operating in the controlled zone of Mid Suffolk District and outlined the options under consideration.
- 5.2 Local authorities have the power to fix the maximum rates of fares for hackney carriages within their District by virtue of section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

- 5.3 The Committee considered the two options set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.
- 5.4 The Licensing Officer responded to Members' questions in relation to the draft table of fares attached as Appendix A and how the tariff in Mid Suffolk compared to other Local Authorities in the region.
- 5.5 During the discussion it was noted that hackney carriage fares have not increased in Mid Suffolk since October 2011. It was suggested that, going forward, this should be reviewed every 3 years.

It was RESOLVED:

That the draft table of fares attached as Appendix A be approved. Further, that officers be instructed to proceed with the public consultation Notice advertising the variations.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10:58am.

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Chair