



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET**

**THURSDAY 14 JUNE, 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor J McNeil (Chair)
Councillor J Williamson
Councillor D Grant
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor J McMillan

Council Officials Present:

Mr I Forrest, Legal Adviser
Ms M Winter, Licensing Administration Assistant
Ms G Herkes Support Services Assistant

Others Present

Insp I MacKay
PC H Bowsher, Lothian & Borders Police
Mr G D Brooks, Co-Chair of East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Association

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor F McAllister

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS – EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Licensing Sub-Committee unanimously agreed to exclude the public from the following business containing exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 6 (information concerning the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Authority) of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

1. Applications for Grant of Taxi/Private Hire Car Driver's Licence

The Sub-Committee considered three applications for grant of a licence; one was granted, one continued and one refused.

2. Application for Renewal of Taxi/Private Hire Driver's Licence

The Sub-Committee considered four applications for renewal of a licence and all four were agreed.

3. Notification of Offence

The Sub-Committee considered one notification of offence and agreed to take no further action.

4. Notification of Complaint

One notification of complaint had been received and the Sub-Committee agreed to continue this matter until their September meeting.

5. Applications for Grant of a Licence to Act as a Street Trader

Two applications had been received and the Sub-Committee agreed to continue both applications to their September meeting.

PUBLIC REPORT

6. TAXI FARE REVIEW

The East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Association had submitted proposals for an increase to fares for the period 2012-13. The Licensing Office had also provided current comparable tariffs for East Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, Edinburgh City Council, and West Lothian Council.

Mr George Brooks, Co-Chair of East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Association, was present. He presented apologies from his co-chair Mr Colin Paxton who was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health.

Mr Brooks stated that an increase to taxi fares was imperative due to the increase in overheads, drivers' salaries and fuel. The increase was also necessary to keep pace with inflation.

The Legal Adviser explained that the Licensing Office would require the approval of Members to begin the process of public consultation on the proposed increase in taxi fares. As part of the consultation, an advertisement would be placed in local newspapers illustrating the proposed new tariffs. A report would then be brought to the September meeting of the Sub-Committee which would indicate if any objections to the increase had been received.

Mr Brooks proposed that the increase last for 2 years, if approved. However, it was pointed out that the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 states that the tariffs had to be set for a maximum of 18 months.

Members discussed the proposal in detail and, in particular, debated whether fares should be reviewed annually or every 18 months, consulting Mr Brooks and the Council's legal adviser.

Decision

The Sub-Committee agreed to authorise the Council to proceed with the consultation process on a 15% increase to taxi fares in East Lothian and to review taxi fares on an annual basis.