



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

**THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor C McGinn (Convener)
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor J Williamson
Councillor T Trotter

Council Officials Present:

Mr I Forrest, Senior Solicitor

Others Present:

PC H Bowsher, Police Scotland

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor J McMillan

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. TAXI FARE REVIEW

The Depute Chief Executive, Resources and People Services, had submitted a report to advise the Sub-Committee on the outcome of the newspaper advertisement of the scale of taxi fares and charges proposed by the East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire operators. The report also sought approval to advertise the approved scales in the local newspaper.

Ian Forrest, a senior solicitor of the Council, presented the report. He advised that, following the decision of the Sub-Committee on 10 January 2019, the Licensing Authority had advertised the scale of taxi fares and charges (as proposed by the East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire operators). The advert had been placed in the East Lothian Courier dated 17 January 2019, inviting any representations by 18 February 2019. None had been received.

Mr Forrest advised Members that the Sub-Committee was now in a position to fix the scale of Taxi Fares and Charges, as advertised. He also advised that Section 18(1) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 provides that any person who operates a taxi for which the scales have been fixed, may appeal these scales to the Traffic Commissioner within 14 days. In order to allow time for appeals, advertise in the local newspaper and to recalibrate the taxi meters to the new rates, it was proposed that the new rates come into operation in June 2019.

Councillor Trotter stated that it was disappointing the Council received little or no feedback to many public consultations, when this process allowed the public to influence decisions which affect them. He asked if the Sub-Committee needed to reconsider how it engaged with the public in order to achieve a better response. Councillor Henderson agreed, commenting that the lack of engagement with newspaper advertisements contrasted sharply with people's eagerness to respond to issues on social media. Mr Forrest advised that the relevant legislation required the proposed new scale of taxi fares to be advertised in the local press, but additional ways to circulate the information could be explored.

The Chair was of a similar mind to his colleagues. He stated that he had been pleased to see so many taxi operators and taxi drivers at the Sub-Committee's January meeting when the proposed new scale of fares was discussed by Members. At that meeting, Members had encouraged them to re-establish the East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Association, and the Chair was pleased to report that positive steps were being taken towards achieving this.

Decision

The Sub-Committee unanimously agreed:

- i. to approve the advertised scale of taxi fares and charges;
- ii. to note that the scale of the taxi fares and charges, as fixed by the Licensing Authority is to be given to the East Lothian Taxi and Private Hire operators (by virtue of Section 17 (4D) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982);
- iii. to approve that the new fares become operative from 3 June 2019; and
- iv. to approve advertising of the approved scales in the local newspaper.

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.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING 7 FEBRUARY 2019 FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the meeting of 7 February 2019 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

Signed

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Councillor C McGinn
Convener of the Licensing Sub-Committee