

**HACKNEY CARRIAGE SUB COMMITTEE
8 SEPTEMBER 1999**

Present: Councillors Egan (Chairman), Beadsley, Blatchford, Mrs Clifford
and Mrs Pile

Apologies for Absence were received from:
Councillor Veakins.

11. Substitute Members

The Sub Committee noted the attendance of the following substitute member under standing order 38:

Councillor Mrs Clifford for Councillor Veakins

12. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 19 May 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. Proposed Tariff Increase (Item 1)

The Sub Committee considered a report on proposed tariff increase, which was previously brought to the Sub Committee at the last meeting on 19 May 1999. Following the advertisement of the proposed increases, one letter of objection had been received from a Bracknell Forest Licensed Hackney Carriage driver. The objections raised were as follows:

- (i) The drivers requested a rise in the drop rate from £1.60 to £2 for the same initial distance. The increase in distance travelled was not acceptable.
- (ii) The usual fares in Bracknell would only increase by 10p to 20p instead of the 40p had the drivers' request been agreed.
- (iii) The increases in fuel, insurance and Council charges were far greater than inflation or the increase in Hackney Carriage tariff charge.
- (iv) The charges were not agreed by drivers prior to publication.
- (v) The charges were complicated because there was not an exact charge for an exact mile.
- (vi) The increased income would not meet the increased cost of running a Hackney Carriage business.

The Sub Committee noted that the matters relating to increases in costs to the business were dealt with in the previous report to the Sub Committee in May. The Office for National Statistics produced a publication entitled 'Labour Market Trends', which included a series of financial indicators including motor expenses. This specifically dealt with motoring costs including fuel, servicing, insurance and depreciation. This factor showed that for the period 1 June 1998 to 31 May 1999 there had been a 3.6% increase in the indicator.

It was reported to the Sub Committee that the Council had a policy of consulting with the Trade through regular meetings and it would be through these meetings that requests for increases in tariffs were received from the trade.

The Sub Committee noted that private hire drivers used a table to calculate fees. This table was created from the Hackney Carriage fees, as the objective was to charge the same as a Hackney Carriage. The objection was made on the grounds that the proposed charges were complicated and that they did not work out an exact figure for the first and subsequent miles. This would cause problems for the private hire drivers.

RESOLVED that the Sub Committee, having considered the objection received, make a modification to the proposed tariff increases submitted to the Sub Committee on 19 May 1999, as follows:

- (i) if the distance does not exceed 480 yards (438.91 metres) for the whole distance change from £1.60 to £1.80;
- (ii) for each subsequent 160 yards (146.30 metres) or uncompleted part thereof – to remain at 10p;
- (iii) this increase becomes effective from 15 September 1999 (not more than two months after the expiry date for objections of 16 July 1999).

14. **Hackney Carriage Fare for the Millennium (Item 2)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on the increase of Hackney Carriage fares for the Millennium period. It was reported that concern had been expressed by representatives of the Trade that if there was an insignificant financial return for working over the Millennium period then Hackney Carriages would not be available on the streets of the Borough. The Sub Committee noted that this was not a problem which was restricted to Bracknell Forest. Councils and the Trade had been addressing the issue in a variety of ways throughout the country. It was also noted however, that should drivers in the Bracknell Forest area not work over the period, it would have a great effect in the Borough due to the high proportion of Hackney Carriage vehicles to private hire vehicles.

Concern was expressed regarding increased tariffs, as it was felt that members of the public who had to pay more for a taxi may be encouraged to drive their own car on the evening and therefore increase the risks of drink-driving. It was felt however, that if Hackney Carriages were not to work over the period then people would be forced to drive their own vehicles and hence increase the risk of drink driving.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the charge for Hackney Carriages for the period 6pm 31 December 1999 to 7am 1 January 2000 be set at tariff 3 with a surcharge of £5 imposed on the initial charge;
- (ii) the proposed increase in tariff be advertised; and
- (iii) any objections received within fourteen days of the publication of the advertisement be reported to the Sub Committee at its next meeting on 1 December 1999, for consideration.

15. **Improving Accessibility to Hackney Carriages (Item 3)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on improving accessibility on Hackney Carriages. Members of the Hackney Carriage Sub Committee and the Access Advisory Sub Committee had accompanied officers to the Mobility Road Show at Crowthorne on 25 June. The purpose of the visit was to look at solutions to accessibility issues and to assess their application and suitability to address the issues as they relate to Hackney Carriages.

The Sub Committee noted that many disabled people had limited choices when needing to travel, which had a significant impact on their quality of life.

It was reported that Hackney Carriage drivers should be encouraged to have more accessible vehicles. It was noted that one way of doing this would be to allow those vehicles that were wheelchair accessible to be sponsored by businesses. Concern was expressed regarding this, as it would be discriminating to allow advertising for one type of vehicle only. The Sub Committee requested that a report be submitted to the December meeting to detail ways of assisting and encouraging the trade and local business to enter into partnerships.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council encourage and assist the trade and local business to enter into partnerships to provide wheelchair accessibility to Hackney Carriages for the community of Bracknell Forest;
- (ii) a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Sub Committee on 1 December detailing ways in which the Council could assist; and
- (iii) from 1 April 2000 it be made a condition of the Hackney Carriage Licence that any new vehicles licensed as Hackney Carriages should be fitted with a swivel seat of a type and specification to be decided prior to the implementation on that date.

16. **Information Items**

The Sub Committee noted the following items submitted for information only:

- (i) Hackney Carriage License Applications (Item 4)
- (ii) Report of Hackney Carriage Trade Meeting (Item 5)

17. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of Item 6 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (4) Information relating to any particular applicant, or recipient (Item 6)
of any service provided by the Authority

18. **Application for Hackney Carriage Licences**

The Sub Committee considered a report introducing an application for a licence, which should have been submitted for consideration at the Hackney Carriage meeting on 19 May 1999.

RESOLVED that a Hackney Carriage Licence be issued to Mr Victor John Redding.

The meeting commenced 5.30pm and
concluded at 7pm

CHAIRMAN