

SPECIAL MEETING OF TAXIS COMMITTEE

Thursday 16th April, 2009, at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Rooms 1 and 2,
at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ameson (in the Chair)
Councillors Attwood, Mrs E. Blood, Body, Mrs Coulter, Mrs Faulkner, Mrs Greenaway and James

Officers

Interim Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services), Licensing Officer and Ms K Farrington (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

Also in Attendance

Group Accountant, Principal Tax Accountant – Support Services, Mr Fidler, External Consultant, Mr S Saleem, Chairman of Dudley Private Hire Trade, Mr M Ali, Secretary of Dudley Taxi Alliance and eight Taxi Drivers.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Roberts and While-Cooper.

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APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Coulter had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor While-Cooper, for this meeting of the Committee only.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Coulter declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of agenda Item No 5 (Revision of Licence Fees), in view of her personal friendship with Mr S Saleem (objector).

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

REVISION OF LICENCE FEES

A joint report of the Interim Director of Law and Property and Interim Director of Finance was submitted on objections received to the revision of fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences administered by the Committee.

Arising from the presentation of the report by the Licensing Officer, the Chairman invited Mr Fidler to respond as a representative for the objectors. Mr Fidler emphasised the representations submitted to the Committee prior to the meeting, with specific reference to the objectors dissatisfaction and concerns arising from the analysis of comparative data and costs with North Tyneside Council, particularly the ratio of staff time being devoted to the operation of taxi licensing administration and supervisory systems. It was suggested that the Local Authority instigate a through review of the management processes and cost allocations applied to the taxi licensing activities it undertakes.

Specific questions were then asked by the Committee and responded to by Mr Fidler.

The Licensing Officer then made representations in support of the original increase agreed by the Committee at a previous meeting and in doing so, made reference to the investigations undertaken to compare taxi licensing activities carried out by the Council with North Tyneside Council. She reported that this indicated that Dudley administered more than twice the number of committee referrals and prosecutions, which generated twice the administration. Reference was also made to the increased activities Dudley offered in relation to the new medical procedures being introduced, which resulted in increased suspensions on the grounds of medical conditions.

Specific questions were then asked by the Committee and Mr Fidler and responded to by the Licensing Officer.

The Group Accountant – Support Services then made comments and answered specific questions in relation to the increase set regarding taxi licensing fees.

Arising from consideration of the representations made, it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse their previous decision to approve an increase in respect of the fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences, as set out in Table A of the report submitted, of 5%, indicated in the report submitted as Option 4.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

CHAIRMAN