

Runnymede Borough Council

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

9 November 2021 at 7.40pm

Members of the Committee Present: Councillors J Wilson (Chairman), D Cotty (Vice-Chairman), M Adams, T Burton and M Harnden

Members of the Committee Absent: None

Councillor T Gracey also attended for items 6 and 7

259 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

260 Fees and Charges 2022/2023

The Committee's approval was sought for the proposed fees and charges relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing, and other Regulatory Services carried out by Environmental Services and Law and Governance for the next financial year. Some fees were set by statute, others could be set locally.

A full breakdown of how fees and charges were set for Taxi licensing was presented, and a copy of the spreadsheet would be circulated with the Minutes. Thanks were extended to Officers for their detailed report. Officers demonstrated that fees and charges were carefully calculated to allow the Council to recover the costs of issue, administration and, in the case of vehicles, compliance.

The Committee noted that the estimated deficit for 2022/2023 for taxi licensing was £94,000, of which £12,000 were non-rechargeable costs. For Gambling, where fees (set by statute) had not changed since their introduction in 2005, the estimated deficit was £9,000; and for other regulatory functions, the estimated deficit was £17,000.

Officers had been engaged in discussions regarding the deficits. Members agreed that full cost recovery (a decision that would have to be made by the full Council) was not viable and should not be recommended if the local trade was to be supported and maintained.

In respect of the new fee for a Fit and Proper Person Licence under Mobile Homes site licences, Officers were asked to provide one Member with the background to its introduction in 2020.

RESOLVED that –

The proposed fees and charges be approved, to be effective from the dates within the appendix or as soon as practical thereafter.

261 Review of Hackney Carriage (Taxi) Fares

The Committee's approval was sought to make no alterations to the Hackney Carriage (Taxi) Fares, following a review and consultation with the Trade, public, and other interested parties.

Members recalled that the last full fares survey was in 2018 and that fares themselves were last increased in 2014. The increases at that time being a 5.5% increase for the pull off rate, 3.84% for the second mile, and 4.76% for subsequent miles, with no increase to waiting time. The Committee noted that the fares set by the Council were the maximum that could be charged, so drivers could choose to charge less if they wanted.

The last survey in 2018 had not attracted many responses and Members were disappointed that this had not improved, with only 7 responses received to the most recent consultation, conducted from July to October 2021. All 84 Hackney Carriage Drivers had been invited to take part, as well as it being advertised on the Council's website and via social media.

Only 4 of the 7 drivers who responded sought an increase in fares and Members agreed this in itself was not enough to justify any alterations. In addition, the Committee was invited to compare fares charged in a selection of other surrounding boroughs as well as in London. Runnymede was close to the average outside of London rates, and in line with its neighbours. Other factors taken into account included fuel prices, insurance and servicing costs and the Consumer Price Index. The Committee was content that no increase in fares should take place in 2022/2023, but that the situation would be kept under review and reconsidered for 2023/2024.

It was also agreed that Officers could consider ways to improve the response to future consultations from the Trade and Ward Members were also invited to encourage greater participation.

RESOLVED that –

Hackney Carriage fare tariffs remain unchanged for 2022/2023.

262 **Revised Statement of Gambling Policy 2022 – 2025**

The Committee's approval was sought to make minor amendments and updates to the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy, prior to its release for public consultation and then re-submission for approval and adoption in January 2022.

Officers summarised the proposed changes to the policy. These included updated wording about the Council's Local Area Profile, and a few minor clarifications regarding Unlicensed Family Entertainment and Adult Gaming Centres as detailed in the policy appended to the report. Officers also undertook to check any formatting issues and the link from the document to the Council's website.

As the proposed changes were very minor and did not alter the substantive content, an updated Equalities Screening Assessment was not deemed necessary.

RESOLVED that –

The revised Gambling Policy 2022 – 2025, be approved for consultation.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.25 pm)