GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE, 11.04.19

Present: Councillors, Steve Collings, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Dafydd Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Peter Read, Angela Russell, Elfed W. Williams and Gareth Williams

Also in Attendance: Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager), Geraint Brython Edwards (Solicitor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Eryl Jones-Williams, Siôn Jones and Jason Wayne Parry.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of a meeting of this Committee, that took place on 10 December 2019, as a true record.

5. MINUTES OF THE GENERAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Submitted, for information, the minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Sub-committee that took place on 20.12.2019

6. MAXIMUM HACKNEY CARRIAGE TAXI FEES

Submitted - the report of the Head of Environment Department, asking the Committee to approve the proposal from the taxi industry to review the maximum fee that may be charged for journeys in a hackney carriage in the County. It was highlighted that it was a requirement that any application to change the maximum fee should be submitted by the industry, and it was confirmed that a recent application to review fees had been submitted by Mr J Pritchard, owner of a local taxi company. It was added that no application to review the maximum fee had been received since 2011, and it was stressed that the maximum fee was not applicable to journeys in private hire vehicles.

Reference was made to a table in the report that compared matching fares for a two mile journey. It was noted that the proposed increase had been calculated by adding inflation at an average of 2.6% per annum, to the journey price per mile specified in 2011. It was

suggested that it was the journey fares within the industry that drove the competition and it was stated that it was unlikely that every company would raise their fares.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

In response to a question about complaints regarding hackney taxi carriage fees, it was noted that very few complaints had been received from the public and it was more likely that complaints would be submitted by the industry itself.

In response to a question regarding evidence to support the statement that there had been no increase in fuel costs, it was noted that average fuel price graphs across the country by the RAC and AA did not show much difference since 2011.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion from individual Members:

- That the proposed fee was fair, compared to the average fares in other Counties across north Wales.
- The Licensing Unit was responding to a request from the industry to review fares
- There was no necessity for companies to raise their fares - it was a maximum that was being set
- That fees had increased and therefore it was acceptable to give fair consideration to the proposal by a local company for the fares to be reviewed.

RESOLVED to approve the proposal to increase the maximum fee in order that the taxi company can increase their charge for journeys in a hackney carriage in the County.

7. SUBMISSION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE TO CONSIDER THE CONTENTS OF THE DRAFT COMBINED TAXI LICENSING POLICY

Submitted - a report by the Head of Environment Department requesting the Committee establish a task and finish group from amongst Committee members to consider the contents of the draft combined licensing policy prior to undertaking a public consultation. Members were reminded of the Committee's resolution (11.09.19) to approve. the general direction of the main proposals to review the current policies in relation to taxi licensing and to create a new Combined Taxi Licensing Policy following an increase in the number of applications to licence vehicles contrary to policy and as a result of the Deregulation Act 2015.

It was highlighted that the main aim of the task and finish group would be to consider the draft policy. The group will be required to submit their observations / recommendations to the General Licensing Committee.

In response to a question regarding public liability insurance and the intention to present the requirement for an applicant for a licence to submit evidence of public liability insurance, it was noted that there was no legal requirement for public liability insurance, however, following discussions with the Transportation Unit it was suggested that there was a need to have public liability insurance in place. The proposal was supported and the need for the document to be available in the vehicle was stressed. It was suggested that the insurance company would also wish this.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion from individual Members:

- It would be wise to consider representatives from Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

RESOLVED to nominate Councillors Annwen Hughes, Angela Russell, Peter Read, Elfed Williams and Edgar Owen as representatives to take part in the Task and Finish Group with Councillor Eryl Jones Williams as a reserve member.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 10.35am.