

ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

21 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Councillors Bishop (Chair), Cox (Vice-Chair), Marlow-Eastwood, O'Callaghan and Roberts.

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

91. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

92. REVIEW OF NEW OPERATOR LICENCE FEES.

The Assistant Director, Environment and Place submitted a report to consider an objection to the proposed changes to Private Hire Operator Licence fees that were agreed on 19th November 2018.

On 19th November 2018 officers and Lead Members considered proposals for a range of licensing fees and charges levied by the Environment and Place Directorate, which included those for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences and the fees for private hire operators licences. The hackney and private hire fees for vehicles and operators were then subject to a statutory consultation and public advertisement.

The advertisement was placed in December 2018, the consultation period ended on 31st December 2018, and the Authority has received a representation to the changes proposed to private hire operator fees but none in relation to the vehicle fee rises.

The Licensing Manager informed the Committee that the proposals agreed in November 2018 sought to simplify the banded fee system. There is a cost associated to the Council's enforcement duties in relation to private hire operators and the licensing authority is only allowed to recoup the reasonable costs associated with those duties. The new bands are based on an analysis of historical data and took into account the level of involvement with different types of operator over the past few years, including calls to the department, complaint investigation, visits made and record verification.

The objector was in attendance and made a submission to the Committee.

The Committee adjourned at 6.32pm to consider its decision and returned at 6.44pm.

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Councillor Roberts proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor O'Callaghan, to proceed with existing proposals.

The Committee thanked officers for their work.

Resolved (unanimously) that:

The Committee instruct the licensing manager to proceed with existing proposals to private hire operator's licence fees.

The reasons for this decision:

The Committee have listened very carefully to the evidence before it. The objector focused his representation on the change to the bands of charges. Mr Brown explained that the changes had been informed by looking at historical evidence of the use of the previous 12 bands some of which were not used at all. The changes in the Council's opinion are now fair and reasonable.

The changes to the fees were necessary to comply with changes in the law. (*Hemming (t/a Simply Pleasure Ltd) and others v Westminster City Council*) The fees are based on actual cost and split between Part A (application) and Part B (licence preparation, issue and ongoing compliance)

The Committee were satisfied that the process was carried out thoroughly by council officers.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.45pm)