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## Extraordinary Licensing Committee

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Monday, 12 May 2025 from 7.00 pm - 7.22 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Derek Carnell (Chair), Simon Clark, Carole Jackson, Lee-Anne Moore, Tom Nundy, Richard Palmer (Substitute for Councillor Chris Palmer), Terry Thompson (Substitute for Councillor Rich Lehmann) and Tony Winckless (Vice-Chair).

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Steph Curtis, Philippa Richardson, Jo Thomas and Helen Ward.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Alex Eyre, Rich Lehmann, Tara Noe and Chris Palmer.

### 822 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 823 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

### 824 **Public Session**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

### 825 **Review of Taxi Tariff**

The Licensing Team Leader introduced the report which requested that Members considered objections made during the statutory consultation for the proposed variation to the maximum fares to be charged for Hackney Carriages, and decide whether to make any modifications to the existing taxi tariff. She also referred Members to the appendices, and highlighted the responses to the consultation set out in the report. There had been no opposition to the increase in soilage charge, from £50, to £100. The Licensing Team Leader drew Members' attention to section four of the report which set out the alternative options, if they were minded to not agree with the proposed recommendations.

The Chair invited comments and questions from Members, and points raised included:

- Clarification sought on the maximum rate for fares and for soilage;
- agreed with the proposed increase in the soilage charge;
- a balance was needed in terms of taxi fares as customers could feel they were being over-charged, versus taxi drivers needing to make a living;
- considered the increased maximum taxi fare of £8.70 was reasonable;
- drivers and operators were against an increase in taxi fares and considered Members should act on the consultation and not increase the fares;
- Swale would be high up on the local Council fare ranking if the fares were increased; and
- the Committee should support the views of the operators and drivers.

In response, the Licensing Team Leader confirmed that drivers were not required to

charge the maximum amount for fares and for soilage. She confirmed that if there was an increase in fares, drivers would need to get their meter re-calibrated at a cost in the region of £25. Fees were calculated by time and distance.

Councillor Simon Clark moved the following amendment: That as the current taxi tariff was fair and reasonable, the fares be left as they are and only the soilage charge be increased; and that the fares be increased biannually. This was seconded by Councillor Lee-Anne Moore and on being put to the vote agreed by Members.

Councillor Richard Palmer proposed the amended substantive recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Simon Clark.

***Resolved:***

***(1) That the current maximum scale of fares for licensed hackney carriages operating within the borough (taxi tariff) remained, taking into consideration comments received during the statutory consultation, and the soilage charge be increased.***

***(2) That the agreement to automatically annually increase the taxi tariff based upon the National Rail fares increase be amended so this is carried out biannually.***

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel