

## **BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE**

#### **SKYPE MEETING, 24 APRIL, 2020**

**Present:** Councillors F Hood (Chair), R Bruce, A Forsyth, V Harper, D Lonchay, D Robertson, M Roy and A Stirling.

**Officers:** Senior Committee Officer (Allan Bell) and Senior Solicitor (Fiona Stewart), both Legal and Governance.

#### **1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Councillor Roy advised that he had an interest to declare in respect of Item 4, by virtue of being a member of the Aberdeen Airport Consultative Committee, but, having applied the objective test, considered the interest to be remote and insignificant and remained during the item in question.

#### **2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Sub-Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - (c) foster relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

#### **3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 7 FEBRUARY, 2020**

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 7 February, 2020, members **approved** it as a correct record.

#### **4. TAXI FARE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 20 March, 2020, by the Director of Business Services (1) which explained that Aberdeenshire Council, as a licensing authority, controlled taxi fares and, in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) 1982, was required to carry out a review of those fares every 18 months, (2) which

advised that the current fare scale had become effective on 1 February, 2017, (3) which outlined the procedure and timetable for consulting with the taxi trade in respect of the fare review and (4) to which were appended a number of possible options for amending the existing fare scale, together with a proposed process for consultation on, and determination of, a new fare scale.

After consideration, the Sub-Committee:-

- (1) (a) **noted** the options for a new fare scale, as appended to the report, (b) **agreed** that, for the purposes of pre-consultation with the taxi trade, options A and B appended to the report should be circulated to the trade for consideration and (c) **agreed** that the proposed revised wording for airport charges, as set out within the report, should be amended to indicate that taxi drivers would be entitled to add any current charge incurred at Aberdeen Airport to a fare, when either dropping off or picking up passengers,
- (2) **acknowledged** that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the corresponding impact on the staging of physical public meetings at present, pre-consultation with the taxi trade regarding fare scales should be undertaken electronically for a period of two weeks, by e-mail and the use of online forms,
- (3) **agreed** to delegate the formulation of a fare scale proposal to the Head of Legal and Governance, taking into account the majority of views to be expressed by the trade through pre-consultation, for publication in a newspaper, in accordance with statutory requirements, following consultation by e-mail with members of the Licensing Sub-Committee, and
- (4) **agreed** that the next taxi fare review after the present one should take place in 12 months' time, instead of 18 months, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic situation.

## **5. USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY CHIEF OFFICER BY REASON OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

On consideration of a circulated report dated 8 April, 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which explained the background to the exercise of delegated powers by reason of special urgency, in respect of vehicle testing and the duration of licences for taxis and private hire cars within Aberdeenshire, the Sub-Committee **acknowledged** the use by the Head of Legal and Governance of those powers, as detailed within an appendix to the report, in order (a) to extend taxi and private hire vehicle licences from one year to 18 months in duration and (b) to relax the requirement for six monthly testing, requiring one test only within the 18 month term of the licence, thereby further protecting staff and members of the public from the potential spread of the Covid-19 virus.