

REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Present: Councillor A Hodson (Chair)

Councillors S Bennett K Murphy
C Cooke M Redfern
G Davies K Stuart
B Hall M Sullivan
M Jordan E Tomeny
L Luxon-Kewley T Laing (In place of
C McDonald J Stewart Laing)

32 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast.

33 APOLOGIES

The Chair confirmed apologies for absence had been received from Councillors James Stewart Laing and Richie Pitt.

34 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Sullivan declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, as a member of Unite the Union.

35 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 be approved.

36 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that there had been no public questions, statements, petitions or questions by members.

37 WIRRAL AWARD 2023

The Civic and Elections Manager introduced a report of the Director of Law and Corporate Services which sought agreement from the Committee that the Wirral Award be conferred on the nominees as recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party.

The Wirral Award is intended to confer civic recognition upon individuals or organisations resident or located in Wirral for an outstanding achievement within the previous twelve months, or for distinguished service to the Borough over a period of twenty years or more. Members were advised that the nominations were considered annually by a working party of senior Councillors, and the Working Party's recommendations with regard to possible recipients of the Wirral Award.

Resolved – That

(1) the Wirral Award be conferred upon the 11 nominees recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party.

(2) appropriate arrangements be made for the recipients of the Award to be invited to a special ceremony.

With the consent of the Committee, the Chair altered the order of the business

38 **POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

The Civic and Elections Manager introduced a report of the Director of Law and Corporate Services which set out the findings following a review undertaken in respect of the use of a polling station venue in the Moreton West & Saughall Massie Ward, which is currently used as a polling place for the purposes of Local Authority, Parliamentary and other elections. The report detailed a proposal to move the Polling Station from Moreton Community Centre to Moreton Methodist Church.

Resolved – That the relocation of the Polling Station at Moreton Community Centre to Moreton Methodist Church be agreed.

39 **BOROUGH ELECTION FEES & CHARGES**

The Civic and Elections Manager introduced a report of the Director of Law and Corporate Services which detailed the proposed fees to be paid to the Returning Officer and his staff employed to undertake duties at the elections held within the Borough.

Members were advised that the cost of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Election was met from a Central Government funding grant and the Government would provide a Fees & Charges order that would detail fees to be paid. The cost of the Combined Authority Mayoral (CAM) Elections were met from the funding provided by the Combined Authority, provisional agreement had been provided by the Combined Authority that the fees to be paid would be in line with the PCC Fees & Charges Order.

Resolved – That the decision of the Returning Officer pertaining to the fees as outlined in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

40 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

The Licensing Manager introduced a report of the Director of Law and Corporate Services which set out objections received in respect of a proposed increase to the Hackney Carriage Fares as proposed by Unite the Union on behalf of members of the Hackney Carriage trade. Members were reminded that at their meeting on 23 November 2023, they had resolved that the proposed increase to the Hackney Carriage Fares be approved subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process. It was reported that 9 objections had been received and the Committee was therefore asked to consider the objections and make a determination on whether to implement the proposed increases.

Members discussed the nature of the objections received and the consultation process at length, noting that the legislation required the authority to seek objections only as opposed to general feedback. The Committee was advised that any amendment to the revised table of fares must come into effect no later than 21 February 2024.

It was moved by Councillor Stephen Bennett, seconded by Councillor Tom Laing, that in respect of the proposed fare increases contained in Appendix 2 of the report –

- The Tariff 1 Day Rate remain the same as the current scheme as set out at Appendix 1 of the Report
- Tariff 2 (Night Rate) and Tariff 3 (Public & Bank Holiday) fares be increased in line with the proposal, with the exception that the initial rate be calculated over the first 350 yards as opposed to the proposed 300 yards;
- The tariff 4 (Christmas) fare initial rate be increased in line with the proposal, with the exception that the initial rate be calculated over the first 880 yards as the current scheme;
- Tunnel fees be chargeable but the £5.00 surcharge for journeys to Liverpool be removed

Members debated the proposal where it was outlined that the rationale was to ensure that tariff 1 remained competitive with the availability of public transport in the day and took account of the objections received, whilst still providing a significant increase for tariffs 2 to 4. It was argued that the Committee had heard from representatives of Unite the Union who spoke of the challenges taxi drivers faced and that the Committee should give account of that representation.

After a considerable debate, the motion was put to the vote and carried (10:4). It was therefore –

Resolved – That in respect of the proposed fare increased contained in Appendix 2 of the report:

- **The Tariff 1 Day Rate remain the same as the current scheme as set out at Appendix 1 of the Report**
- **Tariff 2 (Night Rate) and Tariff 3 (Public & Bank Holiday) fares be increased in line with the proposal, with the exception that the initial rate be calculated over the first 350 yards as opposed to the proposed 300 yards;**
- **The tariff 4 (Christmas) fare initial rate be increased in line with the proposal, with the exception that the initial rate be calculated over the first 880 yards as the current scheme;**
- **Tunnel fees be chargeable but the £5.00 surcharge for journeys to Liverpool be removed**