

From: Poole, Ady
Sent: 18 April 2013 10:12
To: Corfield, Claire
Subject: FW: Objection to a further increase LGO case number 12008969

From: johnjones
Sent: 03 April 2013 12:59
To: Poole, Ady
Cc: K.Chesterman; Matthew Lane
Subject: Objection to a further increase LGO case number 12008969

03/04/13

Dear Adrienne Poole,

Further to my email of yesterday I would like to add the following to my objection for the proposed increase in licensing fees.

On the agenda publication dated Tuesday 11th September 2012 the minutes for the meeting held Tuesday 22nd May 2012 confirm that the increase that has now been implemented "predicted a 97.5% recovery". We hear how the council is making cuts and savings in all departments, if that is true, surely it would be reasonable to expect that the 2.5% shortfall for full recovery has already been achieved. If this cost reduction has not been made by the department then something is drastically wrong and we are being misled.

On the same minutes it confirms that a "full review" would take place within 8 months from the date of the meeting. That would have been by 22nd January 2013. Please confirm that this "full review" has taken place.

It was also mentioned on a number of occasions that the percentage increase had been put up to allow the department to recoup the shortfall over a shorter period of time than the initial expected period because of the delay in reaching the decision to increase the prices. It must be born in mind that the delay was due to the inaccuracy of the figures provided by the council. The council's spread sheet titled Impact of Revised Fees has done the working out over a 10 month period not 12. It therefore follows that the following year the price would have come down by a margin because the rise would now be spread over 12 months. Why has this not been taken into account?

Please confirm that both emails will be put to the meeting as official objections to the proposed increase. I will be sending a copy of both emails to the Ombudsman because it seems to me that this proposed increase is unjust and possibly illegal. I understand the difficult financial position all councils find themselves in but it is wrong to pass a problem of their own making onto the taxi trade and expect us to subsidise them, we cannot afford to do so.

Yours sincerely,

John Jones

PTO

1st email sent to council 02/04/13

Dear Adrienne Poole,

I am objecting to the proposed increase on a number of grounds.

For one, the last increase is still in the process of being investigated by the Ombudsman and I fail to see why you should consider that they will automatically find in the council's favour.

Secondly, you have sent an attachment with the following information: **“THE COUNCIL HAS ALREADY MADE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE WAY IT RUNS, TO TAKE OUT MANAGEMENT COSTS AND TO BE AS EFFICIENT AS IT CAN BE”**. If this statement is true then we should have seen a fall in costs which should be sufficient to cover any perceived shortfall.

Thirdly, the last rise was passed by the council with the proviso that it would be reviewed. I am not aware that the review has in fact taken place and yet we are now facing another rise.

Lastly, I think that it is the council's job to notify all the individual licence holders that could be affected by the intended rise/consultation and this obligation has not been carried out. It is only the licensing department that has the relevant information to contact the people that should be consulted therefore I find the consultation process to be flawed.

I am have pasted and copied from my last email to the Ombudsman regarding the last rise:

Dear Mrs Chesterman,

Your emailed arrived whilst I was on holiday. I also received an email from the council regarding another intended rise. According to the vote taken for the rise, that we are in the process of questioning, the decision was supposed to have been reviewed. I'm not aware that a review has taken place. If a review has taken place I question why we, as an interested party, were not involved or notified

I find it hard to believe that the council has put forward this proposed increase whilst there is a question mark over the last increase and before the outcome of your enquiry. It would seem that the council considers that your decision in their favour is a foregone conclusion.

I will paste and copy both the email and the two attachments from the council. You will note that they have not put this out to the general trade just to a very small handful of proprietors. I do not accept that it is our responsibility to pass this on to the trade; we do not have the resources' or sufficient information to do their job for them.

Yours sincerely,

John Jones

Chairman of High Town Taxis and Spokesperson for Herefordshire Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association