

**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd**

**Democratic Services
Gwasanaethau Democrataidd**

Chief Executive: K.Jones

Date: 8 March 2022

Dear Member,

**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
BOARD - FRIDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2022**

Please find attached the following urgent item for consideration at the next meeting of the **Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board - Friday, 11th March, 2022.**

Item

- a) **Hackney Carriage Fare Increase** (Pages 3 - 16)

Yours sincerely

Tammie Davies

p.p Chief Executive

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board

11th March 2022

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Hackney Carriage Fare Increase

Purpose of the Report

1. To determine a hackney carriage fare increase.

Executive Summary

2. Licensing is generally a non-executive function and as such the responsibility for determining licensing matters is dealt with by the Registration and Licensing Committee.
3. There are however two areas where the Council's Executive has the decision making power, these are: determining whether to adopt hackney carriage stands (ranks), and determining the maximum fare for which a hackney carriage may charge.
4. A number of requests have been received from the hackney carriage trade for an increase to the existing maximum fare for which a hackney carriage may charge.

Background

5. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to set a maximum fare for hackney carriages. The fare applies to distance, time and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle.
6. The Council has already set a maximum permitted fare, and has published a fares table which must be displayed in all hackney carriage vehicles. The current fare table was last amended on the 5th August 2019.

Officer Report

7. An increase to the hackney carriage fare was on the agenda at a recent meeting between the Council and taxi association representatives. It was agreed that a fare increase would be pursued as soon as possible due to the increasing cost of living. It was initially intended that a report be brought to members in June 2022 for approval.
8. In the last week however, there has been a large number of requests for an urgent increase to the hackney carriage fare with drivers and proprietors very concerned about the increasing costs of petrol and diesel as well as service charges and costs such as insurance.
9. The existing and proposed new hackney carriage fare tariff is attached at Appendix 1 and takes account of the following cost factors:
 - Petrol/diesel prices - In August 2019, the average U.K cost of unleaded petrol and diesel were 114.7p and 115.4p respectively. The current local unleaded petrol and diesel prices are 157.9p and 159.9p respectively. This represents an increase of 37% in the cost of unleaded petrol and an increase of 38% in the cost of diesel.
 - Insurance costs - Enquiries with a local insurance broker revealed that insurance costs have remained quite stable since 2019.

- Licence fee costs – This Council’s Licence fees payable to the Council in respect of proprietors licences i.e. vehicle fees, have not changed since 2011.

Timescales for implementation

10. The hackney carriage trade have requested that the Council expedite an increase to the maximum hackney carriage fare due in the main to the increasing costs of petrol and diesel.
11. In order to implement the proposal to increase the hackney carriage fare promptly, the public notice will need to be published on Saturday the 12th March 2022, to ensure that the consultation period of 14 days ends prior to the start of the pre-election period on the 28th March 2022.
12. It would accordingly be proposed that members authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Legal Regulatory Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection to determine any objections received in respect of the proposal and if appropriate implement the revised hackney carriage fares from a date to be determined by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Integrated Impact Assessment

13. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. An initial first stage impact assessment has been undertaken, as attached at Appendix 2, which has indicated a full in-depth assessment is not required

Legal Impacts

14. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to set a maximum fare for hackney carriages. The fare applies to distance, time and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle. When a local authority makes or varies a table of fares they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the area a notice setting out the table of fares or the variation and specifying the period, which shall not be less than fourteen days from the date of the first

publication of the notice, within which and the manner in which objections to the table of fares or variation can be made. If no objection to a table of fares or variation is duly made within the period specified in the notice, the table of fares or variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice.

Risk Management

15. In the last week, there has been a large number of requests for an urgent increase to the hackney carriage fare with drivers and proprietors very concerned about the increasing costs of petrol and diesel as well as service charges including maintenance and parts for vehicles. Drivers have indicated that without a proposed increase to the hackney carriage fare they may find themselves in a position of being unable to trade which could have a significant impact on the provision of hackney carriages for the Neath Port Talbot locality.

Consultation

16. Where a decision is taken by members to increase the maximum fare, the proposed increase must be advertised on one occasion in a local newspaper for a period of at least 14 days; any objections must then be considered before the increase can become effective.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment, that:
 - a. members determine to approve an increase to the maximum hackney carriage fare in accordance with the proposal set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
 - b. members authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Legal Regulatory Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection to determine any objections received in respect of the proposal and if appropriate implement the revised hackney carriage fares from a date to be determined by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Implementation of Decision

18. The decision is for immediate implementation with the consent of the Chair of Scrutiny.

Appendices

19. Appendix 1 – Existing and proposed hackney carriage fare
20. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Screening Assessment

List of Background Papers

21. None

Officer Contact

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Appendix 1 - Existing and Proposed Maximum Hackney Carriage Fare

Tariff 1													
	Initial distance	Start Rate	Per Additional 1/10 Mile	1 mile	% Increase	2 mile	% Increase	3 mile	% Increase	5 mile	% Increase	10 mile	% Increase
Existing	7/10 mile	£2.60	£0.22	£3.26		£5.46		£7.66		£12.06		£23.06	
Proposal	1 Mile	£3.40	£0.24	£3.40	4.29%	£5.80	6.59%	£8.20	7.04%	£13.00	7.79%	£25.00	8.41%
Tariff 2													
	Initial distance	Start Rate	Per Additional 1/10 Mile	1 mile	% Increase	2 mile	% Increase	3 mile	% Increase	5 mile	% Increase	10 mile	% Increase
Existing	6/10 mile	£3.20	£0.25	£4.20		£6.70		£9.20		£14.20		£26.70	
Proposal	1 Mile	£4.40	£0.28	£4.40	4.76%	£7.20	7.46%	£10.00	8.69%	£15.60	9.85%	£29.60	10.86%
Tariff 3													
No changes proposed. Tariff 3 is 100% surcharge on Tariff 1 - applicable on Xmas day & New Years' Day Only													
Waiting Time													
Existing 0.12p per 30 seconds Proposed 0.15p per 30 seconds													
Extra Charges													
No changes proposed to soiling or additional cost for passengers exceeding 4													

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Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary: Hackney Carriage Maximum Permitted Fare Increase
Service Area: Legal Regulatory Services
Directorate: CeX

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users	✓	
Staff	✓	
Wider community	✓	
Internal administrative process only		✓

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age	✓				M	<p>An increase to the maximum permitted fare for hackney carriages will lead to an increase in the amount it costs to hire a taxi in Neath Port Talbot. It will therefore affect any person that uses taxis, regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>It is likely however that the most affected would be those that are the most heavily reliant on public transport; the elderly, disabled and potentially other groups such as i.e. parents with young children - The impact on these groups is marked as medium, not high, for several reasons:</p>
Disability	✓				M	

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is proposed to increase the maximum permitted fare, it is not mandatory for all taxi firms to do so. Operators will sometimes charge less than the maximum fare, particularly where the individuals are taking regular journeys with the same operator. • Regular users of taxis who use this mode of transport for various reasons e.g. commuting to work, hospital appointments, shopping etc. will often have a private contract in place with a specific taxi company or driver and would have already agreed a fare. Officers are aware that this is common practice through discussions with the taxi association representatives and taxi operators. • Low cost community transport is provided by not for profit companies operating within Neath Port Talbot, designed to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities. There are various organisations offering these services within Neath Port Talbot which are advertised online. • The proposed increase to the maximum permitted fare would add 26p to a 1 mile journey and 46p to a 2 mile journey.
Gender Reassignment		✓				<p>An increase to the maximum permitted fare will not specifically impact on persons because of their protected group. The impact will be the same for all users of taxis regardless of the protected group that they belong to. The level of impact will be dictated by a person's ability to pay a higher fare for taxi journeys.</p>
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓				
Pregnancy/Maternity		✓				
Race		✓				
Religion/Belief		✓				
Sex		✓				

Sexual orientation		✓				
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4. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		✓				These are not impacted by the fact that a taxi user needs to pay more for a journey. The Welsh language is not impacted by this proposal.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		✓				

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5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		✓				This is not impacted by the fact that a taxi user needs to pay more for a journey.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment,			✓			The increase to the maximum permitted fare is quite low, but it is possible that if a taxi driver has an increase in pay, then it could lead to the driver purchasing a newer, more environmentally friendly vehicle.

such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.						
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6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	✓		The last increase to the maximum permitted fare was in August 2019. This means that taxi drivers have not had a pay increase for approx. 2 ½ years. The maximum permitted fare increase proposed attempts to strike a balance between ensuring that taxi drivers can earn a sufficient salary, whilst protecting those that are reliant on the use of taxis.
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	✓		Taxi drivers build up experience and have training to identify and report safeguarding concerns (children and adults) and offer assistance to vulnerable people particularly those who are disabled and / or elderly. Taxi drivers also play an important role in ensuring a safe night time economy, providing an essential service for people to get home safely. Where taxi drivers are able to make a good living from driving taxis it will ensure that professional experienced drivers are retained with the service, taxi standards at kept high and ensure the availability of an efficient service that the public can rely on.

Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	✓		Meetings have taken place between the licensing authority and the taxi associations and unions. If the proposed increase is approved, then a public notice must be published that allows the public to make comments in respect of the proposal. Any comments received would then need to be considered prior to implementation.
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	✓		Meetings have taken place between the licensing authority and the taxi associations and unions to try and agree an appropriate increase to maximum permitted fare.
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	✓		<p>An increase to the maximum permitted fare for hackney carriages will lead to an increase in the amount it costs to hire a taxi in Neath Port Talbot. It will therefore affect any person that uses taxis, regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Taxis play an important role in an integrated transport network, and are often an essential mode of transport for enabling people to access local services and health care. In addition, a vibrant day and night time economy relies on taxis to ensure that people are transported safely to and from venues.</p> <p>Where taxi drivers are able to make a good living from driving taxis it will ensure that professional experienced drivers are retained with the service, taxi standards at kept high and ensure the availability of an efficient service that the public can rely on.</p>

7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	✓
Reasons for this conclusion	

There doesn't appear to be any studies / research carried out in relation to taxi usage which can be referenced when making some of the assumptions in this assessment. The proposal strikes a fair balance between an appropriate increase to pay for taxi drivers, whilst ensuring that those who most rely on taxi services are not overly affected. It is anticipated that an increase in the cost of using taxis would most impact those who have less mobility e.g. the elderly, disabled, but would also impact those that rely on taxis and have low incomes. It is considered however, a full impact assessment is not necessary in this instance, as the increase to the maximum permitted fare proposed in the report is consistent with the increases in the cost of living, particularly since there has been no increase to the maximum permitted fare since 2019.

A full impact assessment (second stage) **is** required

Reasons for this conclusion

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Neil Chapple	Legal Regulatory Manager		
Signed off by	Craig Griffiths	Head of Service/Director		