

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

29th May 2024

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Hackney Carriage ('Taxi') Fare Increase

Purpose of the Report

1. To determine a hackney carriage fare increase.

Executive Summary

2. Taxi 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. Several requests have been received from the hackney carriage trade for an increase to the existing maximum fare for which a hackney carriage may charge
5. An information report was taken to the Registration and Licensing Committee on the 15th April 2024, where members were asked for any comments on the proposal to increase the hackney carriage fare. Members of the Registration and Licensing Committee were satisfied with the proposal as presented.

Background

6. 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.
7. 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 in April 2022
8. 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 and because the fares had not increased since April 2022.

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 April 2022, the average local cost of unleaded petrol and diesel were 157.9p and 159.9p respectively. The current local unleaded petrol and diesel prices are 143.9 and 151.9p respectively. This represents a decrease of 8.8% in the cost of unleaded petrol and a decrease of 5% in the cost of diesel.
 - Insurance costs - Enquiries with a local insurance broker revealed that insurance costs have increased by around 50% since April 2022.
 - Licence fee costs – This Council's Licence fees payable to the Council in respect of proprietors' licences i.e. vehicle fees, were increased by 5% in April 2023, however they have not increased further in April 2024.

Consultation

10. A consultation exercise has been carried out with all existing proprietors and drivers. The consultation exercise resulted in 42 responses. A summary of the consultation responses is set out below.

Rate Increase

11. In respect of the proposed increase to the rate per mile. 23 respondents agreed that an increase was appropriate, 9 respondents wanted the rate left unchanged and 10 respondents made no mention to the rate increase.
12. Of the 23 respondents wanting an increase 18 agreed with the rate set out in appendix 1 and 5 respondents wanted the increase to be higher.

Tariff 2 Start Time

13. In respect of the proposal for tariff 2 to start at 22:00 hours, 38 respondents referred to this proposal.
14. 21 respondents proposed that tariff 2 should start at 21:00 hours, 7 respondents wanted tariff 2 to start at 22:00 hours, and 8 requested no change i.e., to remain at 23:00 hours. 2 respondents suggested that tariff 2 should apply all weekend.

Passengers in excess of 4

15. There were only 2 respondents that specifically referenced the increase to the rate for passengers in excess of 4. 1 respondent suggested £1 per passenger, the other respondent agreed with the proposal as set out in appendix 1.

Officer Response

16. Following consideration of the consultation responses, it is proposed to proceed with the hackney carriage fare increase as set out at Appendix 1.
17. In order to implement the proposal to increase the hackney carriage fare, the proposal must first be approved by the Council's Cabinet, and then a public notice published on one occasion and a period of 14 days allowed for representations to be made.
18. An information report was taken to the Registration and Licensing Committee on the 15th April 2024, where members were asked for any comments on the proposal to

increase the hackney carriage fare. Members of the Registration and Licensing Committee were satisfied with the proposal as presented.

Integrated Impact Assessment

19. 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

20. 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

21. No implications

Consultation

22. Consultation has been carried out with all existing proprietors and drivers. Where a decision is taken by Cabinet 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

23. It is recommended that having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment, that members approve the proposal to increase the hackney carriage fare as set out at Appendix 1 however in the event that an objection is received following public advert a report be brought back to Cabinet for a determination to be made.

Implementation of Decision

24. The decision is proposed for implementation after the 3 day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Existing and proposed hackney carriage fare

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Screening Assessment

List of Background Papers

None

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