

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

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