

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Registration and Licensing Committee

15th April 2024

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

Matter for Consideration

Wards Affected: All

Hackney Carriage Fare Increase

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider a hackney carriage fare increase prior to a decision report being taken to the Council's Cabinet.

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. 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.
5. Members are being asked to consider whether any changes are required to be made to the proposal set out at appendix 1, prior to a report for decision being taken to the Council's Cabinet.

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 142.9 and 151.9p respectively. This represents a decrease of 9.5% 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 increase 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.

11. Rate Increase
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Tariff 2 Start Time
15. In respect of the proposal for tariff 2 to start at 22:00 hours, 38 respondents referred to this proposal.
16. 21 respondents proposed that tariff 2 should start at 21:00 hours, 7 respondents agreed with the 22:00 hours proposal, and 8 requested no change i.e., to remain at 23:00 hours. 2 respondents suggested that tariff 2 should apply all weekend.
17. Passengers in excess of 4
18. 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 Report

19. Following consideration of the consultation responses, it is proposed to proceed with the hackney carriage fare increase as set out at appendix 1, but subject to the following amendment.
20. The tariff 2 start time on Saturday evenings to be at 21:00 hours.
21. In order to implement the proposal to increase the hackney carriage fare, a report will need to be considered by the Council's Cabinet. Following approval, a public notice must be published on one occasion and a period of 14 days allowed for representations to be made.
22. Members of the Registration and Licensing Committee are being asked to consider whether any changes are required to be made to the proposal set out at appendix 1, subject to the amendment to

the tariff 2 start time to 21:00 hours on Saturday evenings, prior to a report for decision being taken to the Council's Cabinet.

Integrated Impact Assessment

23. 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. No implications

Consultation

16. 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

17. It is recommended that having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment, that:
18. Members consider whether any changes are required to be made to the proposal set out at appendix 1, subject to the amendment to the tariff 2 start time to 21:00 hours on Saturday evenings, prior to a report for decision being taken to the Council's Cabinet.

Implementation of Decision

19. Following consideration of the proposal, a report will be taken to the Council's Cabinet for decision.

Appendices

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

List of Background Papers

22. None

Officer Contact

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