

Report to Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

By the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing



DECISION REQUIRED/INFORMATION REPORT

Not Exempt

Hackney Carriage Fares – Rate Increase

Executive Summary

Due to the significant increase with the price of fuel and general cost of living, a proposal has been made by the Horsham Licensed Carriage Association and many of the independent hackney drivers to increase the taxi fares.

Set out at Appendix 1 to this report are the proposed increases in Tariffs 1 through to 6 equating to an increase from £6.20 to £7.00 (12.9%) over an average 2-mile journey.

This proposal would see the fares set by Horsham District Council in line with other neighbouring authorities for a 2-mile journey – particularly, Arun and Mid Sussex who impose charges of £7.20 and £7.40 respectively.

A proposed change to Tariff 2 is also made to adjust the hours effective for hiring from 23:30 to 23:00 hours in line with other neighbouring authorities. The expiry time would remain at 06:59 hours.

A soilage charge of £100 is proposed to be added in writing to the tariff card.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

- i) To agree the changes to Tariffs 1 – 6 as set out at Appendix 1 and the addition of a soilage charge, for statutory consultation with the hackney trade and public;
- ii) To agree to advertise the proposed fare increases contained in Appendix 1; and
- iii) That, subject to satisfactory consultation procedure and there being no representations to recommend to Council the approval of the fares contained in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To set standard fares throughout the district
- ii) To prevent fraud and overcharging of passengers
- iii) To ensure openness and transparency in decision making.

Background Papers

N/A

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Contact: Marc Rankin, Head of Environmental Health & Licensing, email: marc.rankin@horsham.gov.uk, Tel 01403215178

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring forward a request from the Horsham Licensed Carriage Association and independent drivers to propose a rise in fares which would increase the flag rate (initial price shown on the meter) and reduce the distance travelled for each 10p charged.
- 1.2 Set out at Appendix 1 to this report, for the Committee's consideration, are a comparison between the current and proposed charges. The proposals would affect Hackney Carriages licensed within the Horsham District. The proposal would not affect Private Hire Vehicles as these set their own fare rates.

2 Relevant Council policy

Statutory background

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for licensing of hackney carriage and private hire driver's, vehicles, and operators.

Relevant Government policy

- 2.2 Fares for hackney carriage can only be agreed following consultation with the trade and public - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Relevant Council policy

- 2.3 Council policy is that fares to be set for hackney carriages following consultation with the trade and public. Under the Council's constitution the setting of fares is the responsibility of Full Council to determine.

3 Details

- 3.1 Due to the significant increase in the price of fuel and living expenses; notwithstanding the table of fares have remained unchanged since 2012, a proposal has been made by the Horsham Licensed Carriage Association and most of the independent hackney drivers to increase the taxi fares.

- **Tariff 1**

The proposed rise in fares would increase the flag rate (initial price shown on the meter) from £3.80 to £4.20. The distance travelled on the flag rate would remain at 1,200 metres with the journey distance travelled being changed from 10p for each 85 metres to 10p for each 73 metres covered. This means that the first mile of each journey would increase from £4.30 to £4.80, and each mile thereafter increasing from £1.90 to £2.20.

This equates to an increase of 12.9% increase over a 2-mile journey

- **Tariff 2**
A proposed change to adjust the hours effective for hiring from 23:30 to 23:00 hours. The expiry time would remain at 06:59 hours.
- **Tariff 3 & 5**
To reflect the proposed change to Tariff 2 hours it is proposed to adjust the hours effective for hiring of Tariff 4 & 5 from 07:00 to 22:59
- **Tariffs 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6**
Fare rates to rise proportionally, in line with the proposed changes to Tariff 1
- **Soilage Charge**
A soilage charge of £100 is proposed to be added, in writing, to the tariff card.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Set out at Appendix 2 to this report is an advert to be placed in the West Sussex County Times at the earliest opportunity detailing the proposed fare increase. The public and any other members of the taxi trade have not less than 14 days from the date of the advert to make any representations to the Council about the proposed increases.
- 4.2 If any representations are received, they will be considered by the Licensing Committee before any final decision is made. It is proposed that subject to the statutory consultation procedure the new fares will take effect at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.3 Once the new fares have been agreed, arrangements will be put in place to recalibrate and reseal all hackney carriage meters.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Consultation with the trade and members of the public who will be affected by the new fares will be carried out during the last week of February and the first week of March 2023. If adverse comments are received from that consultation exercise, then these will be considered by the Licensing Committee.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 Not increasing the fares

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 None

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 8.1 The Council has discretion to set fare rates and charges for Hackney Carriages pursuant to section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Not to increase the fares would risk further reduction in licensed taxi provision within the district.

10 Procurement implications

- 10.1 None

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.1 The proposals will not have a particular impact on any groups with protected characteristics and therefore an EIA is not required.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with these proposals

13 Other Considerations

- 13.1 None