

Regulatory Committee

16 March 2022

Report title	Hackney Carriage Proposed Fare Increase	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	John Roseblade, Director of City Housing and Environment	
Originating service	Licensing	
Accountable employee	Greg Bickerdike	Licensing Manager
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Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendations for decision:

The Regulatory Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the objections to the proposed changes to Hackney Carriage fares.
2. Approve the proposed changes to Hackney Carriage fares.

Recommendations for noting:

The Regulatory Committee is asked to note:

1. Implementation of the proposed increases will occur after meter recalibration at a metered mile in April 2022 at Aldersley Leisure Village.
2. That the revised table of fares will be printed for Hackney Carriage licence holders to be displayed in the vehicle for passengers.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Regulatory Committee of the objections to the proposed Hackney Carriage fare increase and request approval of the proposed fare changes.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the maximum fares charged by Hackney Carriage services can be set by the Local Authority in which they are licensed to trade. The Local Authority has no legal power to control the fares charged by Private Hire Vehicles.
- 2.2 At the meeting of the Regulatory Committee on 19 January 2022, the Committee approved a public notice and consultation on an increase to the maximum chargeable Hackney Carriage Fares within Wolverhampton. The consultation ran from 27 January to 9 February 2022.
- 2.3 The current fares can be found in Appendix 1, with the proposed fares in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 Three objections to the proposals were made, included in Appendix 3. The Committee is required to consider these objections.

3.0 Analysis of Objections

- 3.1 The first objection argues that the proposed fares are too expensive for customers and will reduce trade. It is requested that Wolverhampton's fares mirror Birmingham's fares, which are included as Appendix 4. It should be noted that Birmingham's fares have not been increased since 2012 and it is not considered a sufficient increase for drivers, given the inflationary pressures felt since Wolverhampton's last fare increase. As such, this objection is recommended to be rejected.
- 3.2 This objection also asks for a full consultation with all drivers. All hackney carriage licence holders were consulted on 27 January 2022 via email. This is not a legal requirement, however was done as a courtesy. By contacting all drivers via email and publishing the public notice, the council has undertaken a full consultation.
- 3.3 The proposed increase was not requested by the Council, but was presented by representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade at the trade group. The trade representatives have all approved of the fares proposed in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Those drivers who feel they are not represented at the trade group are cordially invited to join a recognised trade union/association, or alternatively establish a new union/association and request recognition.
- 3.5 The first objection also raises the point that no email address was provided for objections, however objections to public notices on Hackney Carriage fares have historically been requested in writing to the Director of Governance, David Pattison, as Monitoring Officer to the Council.

- 3.6 The second objection proposes an alternative fee structure, which is more expensive for customers and redefines the night rate as from 18:00. It also proposes double tariff 1 over the Christmas period, which the trade group rejected and requested removal of at the last meeting. As concern was expressed at the previous Committee meeting over the impact on customers, this objection is recommended to be rejected.
- 3.7 The third objection proposes an alternative fee structure, which is cheaper for customers, but provides no recognition for Saturday working.

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 The proposed fares are the maximum fares which can be charged to customers by drivers on a journey within Wolverhampton. Drivers are free to quote a reduced rate at the beginning of the journey, as well as or instead of discounting the final fare upon arrival. However, a driver may not request more than is shown on the meter.
- 4.2 Given that there have only been three objections to the proposals and the trade group have given their approval to the proposed fares, it is recommended that no changes be made to the proposals as a result of the consultation.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no costs to the Council. Any charges for meter calibration will be at the Hackney Carriage Vehicle licence holder's own expense.

[SB/17022022/R]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 Section 65 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides:

(1) A district council may fix the rates or fares within the district as well for time as distance, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle or with the arrangements for the hire of a vehicle, to be paid in respect of the hire of hackney carriages by means of a table (hereafter in this section referred to as a "table of fares") made or varied in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(2) (a) When a district council make or vary a table of fares they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice setting out the table of fares or the variation thereof 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.

(b) A copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall for the period of fourteen days from the date of the first publication thereof be deposited at the offices of the council which published the notice, and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.

(3) If no objection to a table of fares or variation is duly made within the period specified in the notice referred to in subsection (2) of this section, or if all objections so made are withdrawn, the table of fares or variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection or, if more than one, of the last objection, whichever date is the later.

- 6.2 (4) If objection is duly made as aforesaid and is not withdrawn, the district council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the table of fares shall come into force with or without modifications as decided by them after consideration of the objections.

[DA/07/03/2022/1]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities implications for this report.

8.0 All other implications

- 8.1 There are no other direct implications.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 19 September 2008 - Application for an Increase in Hackney Carriage Fares - Licensing Committee
- 9.2 21 January 2009 - Consideration of Objection to Proposed Increase of Hackney Carriage Fares - Licensing Committee
- 9.3 16 January 2013 - Application for an Increase in Hackney Carriage Fares – Licensing Committee
- 9.4 10 July 2019 - Application for an Increase in Hackney Carriage Fares – Non-Statutory Licensing Committee
- 9.5 19 January 2022 - Hackney Carriage Fare Increase and Contactless Payments – Regulatory Committee

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
- 10.2 Appendix 2: Proposed Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
- 10.3 Appendix 3: Objections to the Public Notice
- 10.4 Appendix 4: Birmingham City Council's Hackney Carriage Table of Fares