

LICENSING COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

APPLICATION FOR AN INCREASE TO PRESCRIBED HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE RATES

EXEMPT INFORMATION

No exempt information

PURPOSE

To consider an application from Tamworth Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association for an increase in the prescribed Hackney Carriage fare rate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Hackney Carriage fare rates, Appendix 3 be considered, approved and implemented or amended by the committee.
2. Approve the issuing of Notice of the intention to increase hackney carriage fares by advertising in local press for a consultation period of 14 days.
3. If no objections are received, the Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration be authorised to bring the new fare structure into force on a day deemed suitable to re-calibrate taximeters.
4. In the event of objections being received delegate authority to the Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration and the Chair of the Licensing Committee to consider any objections.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A hackney carriage is a taxi with a meter which is licensed to collect passengers from a taxi rank and is available to be hailed in the street. A private hire vehicle, such as a minicab, is not licenced to collect passengers from ranks or to be hailed in the street, but is licensed only to be hired by prior arrangement only. Fares are only set by the council for hackney carriages to which this report relates. Private hire operators set their own fares.

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to fix fare rates for taxi services provided by hackney carriage proprietors licensed by the Authority.

In Tamworth, there are 190 hackney carriage and private hire drivers licensed by Tamworth Borough Council of which 99 or 52% are members of the Tamworth Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association (THCPA). The THCPA is a voluntary body that represents those drivers with membership and historically, it is the taxi body that Tamworth Borough council recognises for the purpose of consultation. It should also be stated that the Borough Council equally recognises and consults the views of all drivers licensed by Tamworth Borough

Council.

The THCPA submitted an application to the Borough Council for an increase in the prescribed fare rate as outlined in Appendix 3.

A tariff increase amounting to the following is applied for; (Appendix 3)

50 pence on the initial flag (370.526 yds)

30 pence on the running mile (1760 yds)

Between 10:30pm and 6am and Bank holidays:

50 pence on the initial flag (370.526 yds)

45 pence on the running mile (1760 yds)

Midnight on Christmas Eve and Midnight on Christmas day
Midnight on New Year's Eve to Midnight on New Year's Day:

50p for the flag drop (370.526 yds)

60 pence on running mile (1760 yds)

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposed increase, if granted would be advertised in the local press at a cost of £200.00 excluding VAT which can be met from existing budgets.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS

Councils must adopt taxi fares in a prescribed manner as contained with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 providing that the procedure detailed in recommendations 1 - 4 are followed. Keeping fares reasonable would encourage the use of taxis thereby reducing private vehicular use, reducing pollution and congestion and assisting in promoting the night time economy however, if fares are set too high there is a risk that those most reliant on public transport are priced out of the market, this could also have an adverse impact on the night time economy and public safety

EQUALITIES

The fare structure specifically excludes extra charges made for the carriage of wheelchairs. The law prevents charges for assistance dogs.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The taxi trade is an important part of the local economy and the level of fares directly impacts on those local businesses. There has been a significant loss of licensed drivers following the Covid 19 pandemic, due to illness, better pay in other sectors and the effect of inflation. However, public safety is an important consideration regarding the night time economy, which can be sensitive to price increases.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tamworth Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association have applied for an increase in the prescribed hackney carriage fare rates. (Appendix 1). The current rates have not increased since December 2017 at which time an application for a 10p increase per mile between 06:00hrs and 24:00hrs, 15p per mile between 00:00 midnight and 06:00hrs and 20p per mile for Christmas and New Year's Day tariff of was approved by Licensing Committee. (Appendix 2)

The Association contends that apart from the above increase there has been no other increase in fare rates for almost five years. There has been a significant increase in the price of fuel because of the Covid 19 pandemic, having a significant impact on the trade. Insurance and maintenance costs have risen and the Consumer Price Index (based on September figures used for pay rises) shows an increase over the last five years of 16.5%. The increase set out in Appendix 3 represents an increase of 20% for the flag drop and 15% for the running mile. Flag drop is 3.5% higher than the CPI for the same period. Running mile is 1.5% lower than CPI for the same period. See Appendix 4 and 5 for a comparison of Tariff Tables.

Although this increase has been requested by the Taxi Association, this is the maximum fare that can be charged by a hackney carriage within the Borough, however a lower fare can be charged at each driver's discretion. Any change to the fare tariff only affects hackney carriage licensed vehicles regardless of whether the driver is a member of the taxi association. Private hire vehicles are not affected by this proposal.

REPORT AUTHOR

Wendy Smith

Appendices

- **Appendix 1; Letter from Tamworth Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association requesting tariff increase**
- **Appendix 2; Current Hackney Carriage Tariff 2017**
- **Appendix 3; Proposed Hackney Carriage Tariff**
- **Appendix 4; Comparison Tariff Table**
- **Appendix 5; Comparison Chart of Tariffs with Local Authorities**

