

LICENSING COMMITTEE (NON LICENSING FUNCTIONS)

Agenda Item 17

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Hackney Carriage Fare Review		
Date of Meeting:	13 October 2022		
Report of:	Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods, and Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Seymour	Tel: 29-6655
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's approval and authority to advertise proposed fare increases following the hackney carriage trade's request for an increase in fares.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Committee approves the proposed fare increases and authorises the Head of Safer Communities to advertise the proposed variation in fares and invite any objections in accordance with the legal requirements.
- 2.2 Agree that if no objections are made, or if any objections which are made are withdrawn, the varied table of fares will come into force in accordance with the statutory scheme.
- 2.3 Reconsider the matter at the next meeting of this Committee if valid objections are made but not withdrawn. As there are strict legal timescales relating to fare reviews a special meeting of this Committee may be required.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The council may fix the rates for hackney carriage fares within the district as well as time and distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle or with the arrangements for hire of a vehicle to be paid in respect of the hire of a hackney carriage. The council does not have the power to set private hire vehicle fares but historically the local operators follow the hackney carriage tariffs set by the council.

- 3.2 Applications for hackney carriage fare increases are made through the Taxi Forum and based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) produced by the Office of National Statistics. If the consensus of the trade agrees with a fare increase, representatives of the trade will be called to a meeting to discuss any proposals with officers of the Council and the lead councillor of the licensing committee who will then present any proposal agreed by that meeting to the next available meeting of the Licensing Committee for their consideration.
- 3.3 The last hackney carriage fare increase came into force in March 2022 and was based on a 5% increase. The hackney carriage trade now seeks a further increase of approximately 5%.
- 3.4 Justification by the trade for an increase in fares is the soaring inflation rates and high fuel costs as well as general motoring costs (parts, tyres, labour, fuel additives) since February 2022 when Members considered the last Fare Review.
- 3.5 The proposal from the trade is based on the on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) produced by the Office of National Statistics which shows the increase in CPI from August 2019 to May 2022 of 10.5%. The current CPI figures would show that this would be 11.9% (August).
- 3.6 The proposal from the trade equates to a 10p increase per mile to £2.70 and the proposed Table of fares can be seen at Appendix 2 and a % change table can be seen at Appendix 3.
- 3.7 A new Night Tariff has been introduced (Tariff 3 & 8) from Midnight to 6.00am. This is to encourage more drivers to work during the night.
- 3.8 Tariffs 6 to 10 are in effect 1.5 x the tariffs of 1 to 4 which was introduced to encourage proprietors purchasing wheelchair accessible vehicles and is applied to vehicles carrying 5 or more passengers.
- 3.9 Currently in the national league tables for fares shows that Brighton & Hove is positioned joint 20th (August 2022) for Tariff 1 at the 2-mile point and after the proposed increase it is estimated that the position will be joint 15th out of 355 Local Authorities. (See Appendix 5) The average fare increases during May-July resulted in the average hackney fare rising by 24p

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Licensing authorities have discretion to fix the table of hackney carriage fares within the licensing district. Demand of a fare greater than shown on the meter is prohibited except by prior agreement for journeys outside the district. Exercising this power offers passengers protection. Not undertaking a hackney carriage review may make businesses unprofitable and inadequate number of taxis to meet demand.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The subject of the fare review is a constant agenda item at the council's hackney carriage and private hire consultation forum where all members of that forum are

free to express their opinions. The forum members have delegated negotiations to selected representatives.

- 5.2 The procedure for presenting the trade's request for a review has been followed. This involves the trade's representatives making representations to the chair of The Licensing Committee (non-Licensing Act 2003) and officers.
- 5.3 A meeting with the trade representatives, the Chair of the Licensing Committee, council officers was held on 05 September 2022 where a proposal was agreed in principle to go to the committee.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Chair and Vice Chair confirmed their support for the proposed fare review follow the meeting with the trade with licensing, legal and financial officers from the Council on the 05 September 2022. If approved by members the increase the Head of Community Safety advertises the proposed variation in fares and invites any objections in accordance with the legal requirements.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

The cost of advertising the proposed fare increases will be met from the existing hackney carriage revenue budget. The fare levels are used by the trade and are not an income stream to the council.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley Date: 14/09/22

7.2 Legal Implications:

The power to fix fares for hackney carriages is provided by Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The procedure is set out in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Name Rebecca Sidell Date: 13/09/22

7.3 Equalities Implications:

Licensing authorities must ensure that a safe hackney carriage and private hire vehicle service is freely available to meet the demand across all sectors of the public, especially those vulnerable groups to whom a taxi or private hire vehicle is often the only means of completing a journey

7.4 Sustainability Implications:

The role of the taxi trade is included in the Local Transport Plan, which identifies it as a key element in providing sustainable transport choices. It creates important links in the transport network to other forms of sustainable transport providing a seamless connection. It will contribute to three of the government's four shared transport priorities – reducing congestion, improving air quality and accessibility. Use of taxis for school transport, licensed vehicles using bus lanes, locating ranks

at railway stations and the city coach station, approved use of liquid petroleum gas and provision of Rapid Charging Hubs all contribute to reducing congestion and moving passengers quickly.

7.5 Any Other Significant Implications:

None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1 Trade Submission

Appendix 2 Proposed tariff card.

Appendix 3 % Change Sheet Tariffs 1-5.

Appendix 4 % Change Sheet Tariffs 6-10

Appendix 5 League Table of Fares