

REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 July 2022

Present: Councillor A Hodson (Chair)

Councillors S Bennett M Collins
C Davies L Fraser
C Jones S Williams
D Kenny C Cooke
M Booth D Mitchell
D Burgess-Joyce

Apologies Councillors C O'Hagan
J Hoey
K Greaney

8 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast.

9 APOLOGIES

The Chair confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors J Hoey, C O'Hagan and K Greaney.

10 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in connection with any item on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

11 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that no questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public and confirmed that Members of the Committee could ask questions further to the representations made.

The Chair further confirmed that three representatives from Unite the Union had indicated they wished to speak.

12 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

The Director of Law and Governance submitted a report for Members of this Committee to consider whether to amend the current Hackney Carriage fare tariffs.

The Licensing Manager reported that the current Hackney Carriage fares came into effect on 1 November 2018 and that whilst a proposal to amend the fare tariffs had been considered in 2019 and received approval in February 2020, the amendments had not been implemented due to the introduction of COVID 19 restrictions.

A proposal had been submitted by Unite the Union to increase the Hackney Carriage fare tariffs as set out within the report. The current fare tariffs had also been set out within the report together with a table comparing the current and proposed rates, a table showing the effect of the proposal and details of the Hackney Carriage fare tariffs applicable in other authorities.

The Licensing Manager outlined the proposal submitted by Unite the Union to increase the Hackney Carriage fare tariffs as follows:

- Increase the initial hiring distance from 300 yards to 1760 yards and increase the initial hiring distance charge from £3.20 to £5.00 on tariff 1 (standard day rate 6 am to 10 pm)
- Increase the initial hiring distance from 300 yards to 1392 yards on tariff 2 (standard night rate 10 pm to 6 am and public and bank holiday day rate inc Easter Sunday) and increase the initial hiring charge from £3.60 to £5.00
- Increase the initial hiring distance from 300 yards to 1160 yards on tariff 3 (public and bank holiday night rate inc Easter Sunday) and increase the initial hiring distance charge from £3.80 to £5.00
- Increase the initial hiring distance on tariff 4 (Christmas and New Year Day and night rate) from 300 yards to 880 yards and reduce the initial hiring charge from £6.00 to £5.00
- Increase the “running mile” charge by reducing the yardage charged at 20p from 230 yards to 215 yards on tariff 1.
- Increase the “running mile” charge by reducing the yardage charged at 20p from 175 yards to 172 yards on tariff 2.
- Increase the “running mile” charge by reducing the yardage charged at 20p from 165 yards to 120 yards on tariff 3.

- Increase the “running mile” charge by reducing the yardage from 230 yards to 107.5 yards and reducing the charge from 40p to 20p on tariff 4.

The Licensing Manager informed Members that should the amendments to the current fare tariffs be approved, the proposal must be advertised for a period of at least fourteen days. If no objections to the proposal are received, the revised tariffs could become effective in August 2022, however should any objections be received they would be reported back to this Committee for further consideration in September 2022.

Caroline Pettersson, Branch Secretary, Unite the Union addressed the Committee and outlined the background which had led to the proposal which included the impact of the increased price of diesel and the effect that Covid 19 had had on the trade. She also referred to the previous proposal that had been made in 2019 that had not been applied. Ms Pettersson advised that the starting prices in the proposal matched the price of a gallon of fuel and believed the proposal was fair and in proportion with the current climate.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Licensing Manager confirmed that the proposal made in 2019 had been approved however Covid restrictions had then been applied.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, Ms Pettersson and Mr Cummins from Unite the Union, advised that average fares were about 2 miles and that they believed that although supermarket fuel was cheaper it was inferior to other petrol stations.

Members of the Committee referred to the need to be mindful to residents and their mobility and whether there had been any data capture to support the proposal.

Members of the Committee sought details of the number of Hackney Carriage Drivers represented by Unite the Union. Derek Cummins advised that there was no current figure available in respect of how many drivers were members of Unite the Union.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the consultation that should take place with Hackney Carriage Drivers regarding the proposal, the Licensing Manager advised the Committee of the minimum legal requirement to place an advert in the local newspaper and allow a minimum of 14 days for objections to be received. Upon being asked whether individual drivers would be aware of the proposal, the Licensing Manager further advised that each individual driver may not be aware of the proposals, however if Members of the Committee wished to proceed with the proposal each driver could be notified of the proposal as part of the consultation. The Licensing Manager advised that the earliest date for the advert to be published would be the week

commencing 8 August 2022. The Committee were further advised that should there be any objections to the proposal then a further report would be brought back to this Committee.

In response to concerns from Members in respect of the increase proposed in Tariff 1, Ms Pettersson advised that many alternatives had been investigated and it was felt that these proposals would be fairer than reducing the yardage.

On a motion by Councillor M Collins and seconded by Councillor D Mitchell, it was -

Resolved –

- (1) That the proposal to increase the Hackney Carriage fare tariffs be approved to come into effect on 1 September 2022, subject to any objections being received as part of the consultation process.**
- (2) That Hackney Carriage Drivers be contacted directly with details of the proposals and that the consultation period be open until 31 August 2022.**