

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE –
ADVISORY MEETING
12 MAY 2022
6.30 - 6.40 PM**



Present:

Councillors Porter (Chair), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Atkinson, Brown, Finch, Ms Gaw, Gbadebo, Mrs Ingham, Kirke, Leake and Mrs McKenzie-Boyle

33. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34. Request from taxi trade to review hackney carriage tariffs

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the Council had received a request from the taxi trade on the 04 April 2022 to amend the current hackney carriage tariffs. The Chairman noted that the tariffs had previously been reviewed in August 2021 but due to a change in circumstances the Council was being asked to look at the fares again.

As this was a function delegated to the Executive the Committee were being asked to comment on the proposals and the proposed consultation process. Their comments would then be conveyed to the Executive when they made a determination on this matter at the 24 May 2022 meeting.

Moira Fraser explained that the Licensing and Safety Committee were being asked to comment on a business case submitted by representatives of the taxi trade to review the current table of fares in light of the recent increase in the cost of fuel, with petrol costing on average £1.64 and diesel £1.78 per litre on the 12 May 2022 in the Bracknell area. It had previously been agreed that the fares would be reviewed annually but the process had been expedited to take into consideration the current circumstances the trade found themselves in.

Officers were proposing that if the Executive agreed to go out to consultation that the public consultation would run from the 01 June to the 15 June to reflect the statutory requirements. A public notice would be placed on the website, on the Council notice boards and in the Bracknell News. Officers would also write to all members of the local taxi trade. The consultation would be advertised via a press release and social media campaign. If no objections were received the revised table of fares would come into operation the day after the consultation closed. If objections were received and not withdrawn, they would be considered at the Executive meeting on the 19 July 2022 and the Executive would be asked to agree a revised implementation date at that point.

Based on the business case the trade was proposing that the maximum Hackney Carriage fare be increased from £6.80 for a two mile fare to £7.80 during Tariff 1 operating hours. This was largely in line with neighbouring authorities.

Officers reported that the waiting time for the flag rate as set out in Appendix D had been calculated incorrectly and should be 1 minute and 22.96 secs. This would be amended in the Executive report prior to publication.

The following points were noted:

- Members commented that the price of fuel was escalating rapidly and therefore it was appropriate to review the current table of fares.
- There was no evidence that the price of fuel was going to come down in the near future and the Council needed to respond to the justifiable submission from the trade.
- The cost of fuel had increased by around 25% and the proposal represented an increase of circa 15% and was therefore a proportionate increment.
- The taxi trade had been subjected to difficult trading conditions over the past two years as a result of the Covid pandemic and the Council needed to support them where it was able to do so.
- These were the maximum fares that could be charged, and drivers were not compelled to charge the new rates. Drivers that wanted to charge lower rates would be able to do so provided that the lower charges were agreed prior to the journey commencing.

Having discussed the matter it was **RESOLVED** that

1. The existing tariffs which had been in place since 01 August 2021 be noted.
2. The business case put forward by the trade and consultation process as set out in the report be supported.
3. The outcome of the consultation be reported to the Licensing and Safety Committee at their meeting on the 23 June 2022.

CHAIRMAN