



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Licensing Committee	25 April 2023

<b>Proposal for the variation of Hackney Carriage Fares within Wyre Borough - 2023</b>
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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1** To provide Members of the Licensing Committee with information to assist them at a hearing to consider a proposal from members of the licensed hackney carriage trade within Wyre Borough for a variation in the maximum fares which may be charged by hackney carriages licensed by Wyre Council.

## **2. Outcomes**

- 2.1** To consider the proposals then recommend or approve any amendments to the current table of fares for hackney carriages licensed within the Wyre Council area.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1** It is recommended that Members consider whether to:
- Modify the current table of maximum fares, or;
  - Make no modification to the current table of maximum fares.
- 3.2** To approve that, if agreement is given to modify the existing table of fares that the matter can progress to public advertisement.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members that a request has been made for a review to the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff.
- 4.2** Members should note section 10 of the current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy for Wyre Council. Specifically section 10.1 which states "The Council is responsible for setting the Hackney Carriage Tariff, which is a table of the maximum fares that may be charged for a journey".

- 4.3** Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows district councils to fix the maximum rates of fares for hackney carriage journeys (but not for private hire vehicles which are determined by market forces). No time period has been set by the Act for the review of such fares but the council would be required to publish a notice setting out any variation to the existing table in a least one local newspaper circulating within the borough. Additionally, the council would also be required to display a notice, containing the specifics of the newspaper advertisement, at their main offices for a period of 14 days which would commence on the first day of publication.
- 4.4** Members should note that lodging an advert in a local newspaper and displaying a notice at the Civic Centre is a legal requirement and consistent with how this matter has been handled previously.
- 4.5** The current scale of maximum charges (table of fares) for Hackney Carriages operating within Wyre have been in place since 4 October 2022. A copy of the current table of fares is attached at **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 4.6** The last proposal to vary the table of fares was initially considered by the Licensing Committee on 28 June 2022. After considering the proposal the Licensing Committee recommended a slight amendment to the available options and also resolved that the matter could progress for consideration at Cabinet (**Appendix 2**). The revised proposal was then put before Cabinet and approved for public advertisement on 7 September 2022. Wyre Council subsequently advertised the revised proposal in the Blackpool Gazette between 15 September 2022 and 29 September 2022. In conjunction with the newspaper advertisement a public notice was also displayed at the Civic Centre for a period of 14 days. The revised table of fares came into effect on 4 October 2022.
- 4.7** The provision of taxis is an integral part of the transport infrastructure and is particularly influential in the transportation of individuals late at night when other forms of public transport services have ceased. The provision of affordable taxis assist in community safety by ensuring people are removed from town centres safely.
- 4.8** In addition to this it is important to consider that hackney carriages provide a vital form of transport for the disabled who may have difficulties accessing other forms of public transport. On this basis it is critically important to ensure that fares are maintained at a level which will encourage investment in DDA compliant and low emission vehicles yet remain affordable to disabled people.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

- 5.1** Representatives of the licensed trade within Wyre lodged proposals on 7 February 2023 to vary the tariffs. A full outline of the proposals can be viewed at **Appendix 3** of this report.
- 5.2** An accurate comparison of proposed and existing tariffs (including percentage increases) can be viewed at **Appendix 4** of this report. This document was created with the use of a tariff calculator and based solely on the data contained within the proposals put forward by the trade.
- 5.3** A trade-wide consultation was launched on 15 March 2023 and ran until midnight on 31 March 2023. The options circulated to the trade consisted of the two proposals they had put forward and an option for no changes to be made to the existing table of fares. Members should note that the consultation was circulated to over 300 drivers licensed within the borough and a copy of the information they were provided with can be viewed in full at **Appendix 5**.
- 5.4** The results of the poll seeking their opinion can be reviewed at **Appendix 6** and clearly highlight that the overwhelming majority voted for option 3 which would in effect result in increases of 15% for tariff 1 and 15.48% for tariff 2 – again this is fully broken down within **Appendix 3, Appendix 4 and Appendix 5**.
- 5.5** To assist members with their decision-making **Appendix 7** contains tariff cards for neighbouring authorities across Lancashire. Members may also be minded to consider **Appendix 8** and **Appendix 9** because they contain information that illustrates ‘at pump’ prices for petrol and diesel since 2004 and that Wyre Borough Council sits 247 out of 349 authorities in the Hackney Carriage Fare league tables. By comparison the trade within Ribble Valley, Blackburn with Darwen and Fylde are currently ranked higher for their rates than Wyre. Additionally, members may be minded to consider that factors such as the rising cost of living, levels of inflation and interest rates have not improved since this matter was last considered by the Licensing Committee in June 2022.
- 5.6** Thus, as part of the decision-making process members should consider whether the proposals are:
- Reasonable and fair to all stakeholders;
  - Proportionate with the locality;
  - Benchmarking with other local authorities;
  - Justified;
  - Simple, and easily calculated;
  - Designed with a view to practicality;
  - Mathematically correct and capable of being entered onto a meter;
  - Designed where possible to avoid either deliberate or accidental over charging.

Finance	There are no direct financial implications for the council in setting the fares for hackney carriages, excepting the statutory advertising cost in a local newspaper for which a budget exists.
Legal	The power to set the fares for hackney carriages is contained in section 65 of the local government (miscellaneous provisions) act 1976. No such powers exist for the regulation of private hire fares.

### Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	✓
equality and diversity	✓
sustainability	X
health and safety	X

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	X
climate change	X
ICT	X
data protection	x

### Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy	Version of April 2022	<a href="#">Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (wyre.gov.uk)</a>
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.	Section 65	<a href="#">Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>

## **List of appendices**

Appendix 1	Current Wyre table of tariffs
Appendix 2	2022 Report and associated documentation
Appendix 3	Proposals bundle
Appendix 4	Comparison of existing tariffs against proposed changes
Appendix 5	Wyre Council Taxi Tariff Consultation 2023
Appendix 6	Results of 2023 consultation
Appendix 7	Updated Tariff cards for other authorities
Appendix 8	Prices of petrol and diesel since 2004
Appendix 9	Fare league tables