

Regulation and Review Committee

20 September 2018

Present: Councillor J Stirling (Chair)
Councillors K Bolger, T Brady, D Cox, John Hunter,
M Madden, D McMeekan, T Mulvenna,
J O'Shea, A Percy, M Reynolds and L Spillard.

RQ22/09/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Allan, A Austin, J Mole and K Osborne.

RQ23/09/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor T Brady for Councillor J Mole.

RQ24/09/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor John Hunter declared a non-registerable personal interest in the Request for a Hackney Carriage Fare Review item as a family member was a private hire driver licensed by North Tyneside Council. Councillor Hunter declared that he had an open mind on the matter and would take his decision in the interest of all residents of the borough.

RQ25/09/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Regulation and Review Committee held on 18 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair and the minutes of the Regulation and Review panel meetings held on 4 July, 30 August and 3 September 2018 be noted.

RQ26/09/18 Request for a Hackney Carriage Fare Review

The Authority may fix or vary a table of fares for Hackney Carriages by virtue of Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Under the Authority's Officer Delegation Scheme (ODS) the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure had the delegated authority to set fares for hackney carriages following the appropriate consultation with the Cabinet Member and Regulation and Review Committee (delegation EHL105, ODS June 2017).

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The North Tyneside Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy allows for an annual review of the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff or when requested by the trade. The Committee was informed that the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure had received a request from the North Tyneside Hackney Carriage Association (NTHCA) to review the fare table and sought the Committee's views on the request.

An agreed formula (last consulted upon in 2006) was used to calculate a 'cost per mile' figure for the operation of a Hackney Carriage. The formula took into account vehicle running costs, including insurance, and driver earnings based on average earnings for the region. Once the request from the NTHCA had been received officers applied this formula to produce a maximum 'cost per mile' figure for the operation of a Hackney Carriage of £2.56.

The Committee was informed that the NTHCA had requested the review because the latest 2018 review had been "based on figures at least eight months out of date. Insurance, vehicle repairs and not least fuel costs [had] all increased dramatically; the cost of V power diesel [was] now £1.40 per litre which most proprietors [used] as it lowered emissions significantly".

The NTHCA request was as follows:

Tariff one

Increase the yardage from 178.9 yards or part there of or 44.5 seconds to 213 yards or part there of or 53 seconds.

Flag fall increased from £1.60 to £1.80

Tariff two

Reduce the yardage from 152.90 yards or part there of or 42.5 seconds to 182 yards or part there of or 51 seconds.

Flag fall increased from £2.40 to £2.60

Officers had calculated the cost of the above request to produce an average cost per mile of £2.94.

The Committee was reminded that on 21 March 2018 it had received a report on the annual Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2018 and resolved to note the annual review of the hackney carriage fares and officers' recommendation that the Hackney Carriage fare table should remain unchanged for the 2018/19 period and made comments regarding the formula (previous minute RQ119/03/18).

In response to questions it was confirmed that the figures in the report were that requested by the NTHCA; that the request equated to a 6% increase; and that the figure for the cost of fuel in the formula was an average of petrol and diesel, which was not the V power diesel referred to by the NTHCA.

The Committee was reminded that it was not the decision maker in this matter and it had been bought before them to provide a consultation response on the request to the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure.

The Committee made the following comments in relation to the request for a review of the Hackney Carriage fares:

- A 6% increase in the current economic climate was quite steep.
- The table should remain unchanged for this calendar year.
- The overall increase on a fare was not that great in value and was not unreasonable.
- Drivers are only paid when they have a passenger so can often be sat without work and a review was not an unreasonable request.
- The people have the choice between a hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle and choose to pay the higher fares.
- The cost of a hackney carriage ride was not too much.
- The increase in costs was a reality and people don't have to use taxis if they don't want to.

To provide the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure with a single response from the Committee, the matter was put to a vote.

Resolved that a review of the Hackney Carriage Fare Table at this time was appropriate and that the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure be notified of the Committee's view to inform his decision on the matter.