

Licensing Committee

11 October 2023

Weymouth and Portland Zone Hackney Carriage Fares

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr L Beddow, Culture and Communities

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: To consider a rise to the maximum level of fares for the financial year 2024/25 for the Hackney Carriage Proprietors in Weymouth and Portland.

Recommendations: To recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities that they: -

- i. Consider the proposed 2024/25 maximum tariff for the Weymouth and Portland Hackney Carriage Zone as set out at Appendix 3.
- ii. Authorise a consultation with all of the Weymouth and Portland Hackney Carriage proprietors.
- iii. Authorise the public consultation of the new tariffs, including advertising in a local newspaper.
- iv. Agree that the new tariff will come into effect on 1 April 2024 if no objections are received within the specified time limit in the consultations.

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure openness and transparency in the Council's decision making, and to ensure that those persons affected by changes are given the opportunity to make representations.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Dorset Council Taxi Licensing Policy removed the historic zones that have operated in the Dorset Council area, apart from the Weymouth and Portland Hackney Carriage Zone that remains in place due to the restricted number of vehicles that can operate as Hackney Carriages there. See paragraphs 2.16 - 2.19 of the Policy which is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Paragraph 2.25 of the Policy states there will be one maximum tariff for the whole Council area, apart from the Weymouth and Portland Zone.
- 1.3 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 sets out the legislative provisions for setting the maximum tariff. Section 65 requires that any changes to fares need to be advertised as part of a public consultation. An extract of the legislation is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.4 The 2024/25 fares were proposed by the Weymouth and Portland Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Association as the final part of a three yearly plan for small increases each year.
- 1.5 It is proposed that the revised Tariff be brought into force on 1 April 2024.

2. New Fares

- 2.1 The Weymouth Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Association are of the opinion that smaller annual increases are accepted by the travelling public better than infrequent larger ones.
- 2.2 Every Hackney Carriage Proprietor in Weymouth will be sent a copy of the proposed fares as part of a consultation exercise.
- 2.3 The existing tariff and the proposed tariff can be found at Appendix 3.
- 2.4 If the Licensing Committee agree to recommend the maximum tariff to the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities, two consultations will be carried out. The first will be with the Hackney Trade in Weymouth and Portland and the second will be a public consultation lasting two weeks which will include publishing a newspaper advertisement.
- 2.5 Should representations be received, the matter would be brought back to the Licensing Committee for consideration before any new tariff comes into effect.
- 2.6 If no representations are received, or the only representations received are in favour of the increase the new tariff, if agreed by the Licensing Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community, the revised tariff would come into effect on 1 April 2024.

3. Financial Implications

The funding for the public consultation of the fares will come from existing budgets. The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing regime is operated on a cost-recovery basis, so any advertising costs are met from this. There are no further financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

5. Well-being and Health Implications

There could potentially be an impact on the health and wellbeing of the public if the hackney carriage fares are set too high, which could make this form of transport inaccessible to some. The same could however be said if the fares are set too low resulting in a reduction of vehicles as they become uneconomical to run.

6. Other Implications

There are no implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council.

7. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as: -

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

An EqIA was prepared as part of the wider Dorset Council Taxi Licensing Policy consultation when the policy was adopted.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Dorset Council Taxi Licensing Policy

Appendix 2 Legislation

Appendix 3 Existing and Proposed Tariff

10. Background Papers

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976