



Regulatory Committee

Thursday 29 January 2009 7.30 pm

**Council Chamber
Civic Offices, Addlestone**

**This meeting takes place immediately after
the Licensing Committee**

Members of the Committee

Councillors D W Parr (Chairman), R J Edis (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P I Broadhead, Mrs M T Harnden and C Knight.

In accordance with Standing Order 29.2 any non-member of the Committee who is considering attending the meeting should first request the permission of the Chairman.

A G E N D A

Notes:

- i) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- ii) The relevant "background papers" are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Miss C. Pinnock, Department of Administration and Leisure, Committee Section, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425627). (Email: clare.pinnock@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr. B.A. Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
- iv) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

- a) Exempt Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. MINUTES

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2008 which were included in the October 2008 Minute Book previously circulated.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

6. REVENUE ESTIMATES 2009/10 (DF)

(Ref: Minutes of Regulatory Committee, January 2008, page 695 para 492)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to consider the draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10.**

2. Background Information

2.1 A budget is the expression in financial terms of the Council's policies over the next year and is a statement of intention against which achievement can be compared. The main objectives of budgeting are:

- Satisfaction of statutory requirements
- Determining the amount which needs to be raised from Council Tax or rents
- Assisting in the planning and policy making process
- Policy implementation and control
- A means of measurement, and
- Strategic planning.

3. Report

3.1 The report of the Director of Finance containing the draft Revenue Estimates and fees and charges for the services under the remit of this Committee is attached at Appendix 'A'.

3.2 The estimates are separated into the following sections:

- i) Regulatory estimates (pages 2 - 11)
- ii) Assumptions used in setting the budgets for 2009/10 (pages 12 - 15).

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) the draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10 as attached at Appendix 'A' be approved as submitted; and**

- ii) **the proposed schedules of charges for 2009/10, as set out in Appendix 'A' be approved to be effective either from the first week of April 2009 or 1 April 2009 as appropriate.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None Stated.

7. HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE INCREASE 2009 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976

(Ref: Minutes of the Regulatory Committee, January 2008, page 695, para 493)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to consider the level of fare tariffs charged by Hackney Carriage vehicles.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Following a comprehensive survey with the taxi trade in November 2006 and an open forum in December 2006, it was agreed that Officers would recommend a review of the fare tariff by the Council on an annual basis. Previously, tariff changes had been made on an ad hoc basis in response to requests for a review from the trade.

2.2 Fares were increased on 1 April 2007 by 10%, when taking into account the new additional rate of 1¼ was introduced for Sundays and late evening between 2200hrs and midnight. (The night rate between midnight and 0600hrs remained at 1½.) Fares were then increased again on 1 April 2008 by 5.5%.

2.3 Calendar control has been compulsory for all vehicles fitted with taximeters since April 2007. Drivers can no longer manually select one of the four rates programmed, dependent on time of day and whether or not it is a National Holiday.

2.4 Calendar control eliminates the possibility of an error either by genuine mistake or otherwise and may be programmed with national holiday and BST/GMT up to 3 years in advance. Some taximeters may also be programmed to make tariff changes before the due date, therefore easing the burden on the trade and Council resources.

3. Report

3.1 It is a requirement that all Hackney Carriages are fitted with a meter indicating the fare chargeable. Many Private Hire vehicles are also fitted with a meter, although they undertake pre-quoted bookings and the meter is not fully utilised.

3.2 In considering a proposal to alter the fares it is appropriate to make a comparison with other authorities locally and this is attached at Appendix 'B'.

3.3 Government statistics shows the target Consumer Prices Increase (CPI), to have risen gradually over the previous 12 months, peaking at over 5% in September, before dropping back to 4.1% by November. It is predicted to fall further over the coming months.

3.4 With regard to other forms of public transport, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has announced fare increases, scheduled for January 2009. Regulated fares (season tickets and standard returns) which are capped by Government at 1% above inflation will increase by 6% and unregulated travel (most leisure and advanced purchases) by 7%.

3.5 Runnymede's licensing fees and charges are reviewed and adjusted annually. The renewal fees for vehicle and driver licences are scheduled to rise by an average of 7.1% in April 2009.

3.6 The Automobile Association produces monthly statistics on the average cost of fuel. The cost of diesel has surged from £1.09 per litre in January 2008 to £1.33 in July, falling to

£1.02 per litre in December 2008. Although fuel prices are similar now to where they were a year ago, the 30% increase in the summer was cause for concern to the trade. A typical full time driver covering 50,000 miles per year, at 48mpg is therefore likely to spend around £5,000 a year on diesel fuel at December 2008 prices.

- 3.7 A consultation letter and questionnaire was sent out to all 290 drivers and operators in November 2008 as attached at Appendix 'C'. A summary of the findings were sent out to those who replied the following month as attached at Appendix 'D'.
- 3.8 A meeting with drivers and operators from within the taxi trade took place on Thursday 15 January 2009. Thirteen drivers attended the meeting.
- 3.9 At the meeting, twelve drivers expressed concerns regarding any increase in the proposed fare card, particularly when the current economic situation was taken into account. One driver was in favour of an increase; but was equally content to acquiesce with the majority. The drivers felt strongly that any increase to the fare card be suspended for three to six months, subject to further consultation.
- 3.10 This request somewhat contradicts the response to the initial consultation which took place in November 2008, when 26 out of 34 respondents requested an increase. However, the recession is unprecedented and Officers can understand the concerns expressed by the drivers at the meeting. It is therefore considered appropriate that fares are maintained at their existing levels until 1 April 2010, or an earlier date to be recommended, if subsequent representations are received during 2009/10.
- 3.11 Previous feedback from the trade indicated difficulties in calculating the time factor of fares unless multiples of 60 were used. A suggestion of keeping all fares in multiples of 10p has also been adopted by adjusting rate 2 in allowing increments of 20p rather than 25p, but adjusting the distance and time accordingly.
- 3.12 Drivers are generally reluctant to increase the initial 'pull off' or 'flag' charge, currently set at a rate of £3.20, due to the psychological effect on passengers when the taximeter is set to 'fare' it stays at the same price for the first mile. Furthermore, a figure divisible by 40p eases the need for carrying a lot of change due to 'silver pricing'.
- 3.13 An increase of 5% is proposed by Officers, for subsequent miles travelled, from £2.00p to £2.10p by *decreasing* the distance covered for each 20p from 161m to approximately 153.3m. The current 40p supplement, on the second mile only, may also continue to be included making a total of £2.05p.
- 3.14 A similar adjustment to the 'waiting time' is proposed by increasing the hourly rate from £19.20 to £20.40 or 34p per minute and *decreasing* the time allowed for each 20p from 37.5 to approximately 35.3 seconds. This equates to an increase of 6.2%.
- 3.15 A revised fare card is attached at Appendix 'E', subject to minor alteration if necessary, as fares are kept under review between now and 2010.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 It is appropriate to review Hackney Carriage Fares either at the request of Hackney Carriage proprietors or in the event of increases in costs experienced by the trade. The last increase in fares was April 2008.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Where an increase in fares is agreed arrangements will be made for all the meters to be adjusted and tested against the measured mile. There are 179 Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles fitted with taximeters. This will be met from within existing resources.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 65, permits local authorities to set fares for Hackney Carriages. This legislation also requires that the proposed changes be published in a local newspaper prior to implementation. If any objections are received these will have to be considered by this Committee at its next meeting.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

subject to no further representations being received, the proposed Hackney Carriage Fare Rates set out in Appendix 'E' be adopted with effect from Thursday 1 April 2010, or an earlier date to be recommended if subsequent representations are received during 2009/10.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None Stated.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If Members are minded to consider any of the foregoing items in private, it is the

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

where appropriate the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the report(s) under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report(s) in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

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