

Regulation and Review Committee

24 January 2017

Present: Councillor K Osborne (Chair)
Councillors A Arkle, P Earley, John Hunter,
M Huscroft, G Madden, M Madden, D McMeekan,
L Miller, J O'Shea and L Spillard.

RQ31/01/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors W Lott and T Mulvenna.

RQ32/01/17 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members appointed.

RQ33/01/17 Declarations of Interest

Councillor John Hunter declared in relation to the Review of North Tyneside Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy that he had a non-registerable personal interest as his son held a combined drivers licence (minute RQ34/01/17).

Councillor L Miller declared in relation to the Review of North Tyneside Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy that he had a registerable personal interest as he was a Director of a Medical Group and a member of the local medical committee which would be consulted on with regard to the use of electronic medical records for Medical Fitness tests (minute RQ34/01/17).

Councillor John Hunter declared in relation to the Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2016 that he had a non-registerable personal interest as his son held a combined drivers licence. Councillor Hunter stated that he would not participate in the decision making on this item and would leave the meeting room (minute RQ35/01/17).

RQ34/01/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the panel meeting held on 17 November 2016 be noted and the full committee meeting held on 29 November 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

PQ35/01/17 Review of North Tyneside Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

The North Tyneside Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy took effect on 9 April 2009 and had been regularly updated to reflect decisions taken by the Authority.

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Recent examples related to tinted windows on licensed vehicles, advertising and the limitation of hackney carriages. Due to legislative changes the policy had been reviewed again in 2016 and consultation took place with officers, the trade and Members to draft a revised policy. Once a proposed revised policy had been drafted formal consultation for a period of 12 weeks began. The consultation concluded on 31 September 2016 and included notices and information on the Council's website, council offices, libraries and information in the press via a press release; an online survey was also produced to enable responses to be made online.

29 responses were received from a mixture of residents, trade and trade associations. All responses were considered by officers and a Member Working Group. Where the group accepted recommendations the draft policy was amended to include them; all the responses received and the working groups' decision on each was included as an appendix to the report.

The Public Protection Manager circulated a table of further amendments required to the draft policy to correct typos, provide clarification and reflect changes to the names of services within the authority which had been identified since the publication of the report. Each of these amendments was considered in turn by the Committee and comments on the whole document were made by Members and answered by officers.

During discussion the following changes were made:

1. In paragraph 34 of chapter three 'Drivers' the last sentence was amended to read "If training is not completed by this date the driver will be referred to Regulation and Review Committee" to illustrate the seriousness of not completing the training on child sexual exploitation awareness.
2. In paragraph 48 of chapter seven 'Convictions, Cautions, Conduct & Medical Fitness' the words "any relevant electronic medical record held" be deleted to ensure that the appropriate level of record was being provided.

It was suggested and accepted by officers that further discussions be held with the local medical committee on what procedures could be adopted to allow medical practitioners to use electronic records whilst ensuring they were of the appropriate detail.

Resolved that the revised North Tyneside Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as amended above be adopted and come into force on 1st April 2017.

RQ36/01/17 Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2016 (previous minute RQ29/11/16)

At the meeting held on 29 November 2016 the Committee resolved to publish a Notice in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the variation of the table of fares for Hackney Carriages to:

TARIFF ONE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| (i) For the first 178.9 yards or 44.5 seconds (or part thereof) | £1.60 |
| (ii) For each subsequent 178.9 yards or 44.5 seconds (or part thereof) | .20 |

TARIFF TWO

For hirings between 10.00pm and 07.00am, and all day Sundays, Bank Holidays and on

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December 27th, 28th 29th, 30th and 31st in each year:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| (i) For the first 152.9 yards or 42.5 seconds (or part thereof) | £2.40 |
| (ii) For each subsequent 152.9 yards or 42.5 seconds (or part thereof) | .20 |

EXTRA CHARGES

Charge for soiling carriage	£100.00
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This reduced the yardage in Tariff 1 from 187.8 yards or part thereof to 178.9 yards or part thereof and reduced the yardage for Tariff 2 from 160.5 yards or part thereof to 152.9 yards or part thereof. It also increased the 'charge for soiling the carriage' from £80 to £100.

The Notice had been published on 2 December 2016 and as objections had been received within the prescribed 14 days the matter had to be referred to the Committee for a final determination on whether to proceed with the variation.

The report submitted to the Committee included copies of the seven objections received, which were all from the trade, and objected to the increase because fuel prices were down, insurance premiums had reduced and the negative impact they believed an increase would have on their competitiveness. Reference was also made in the objections to the number of drivers represented by the North Tyneside Hackney Carriage Association (NTHCA), which had requested the increase, and the competition from Uber and private hire vehicles.

The Committee was informed that if it determined to proceed with the revised fares a date upon which the new fares would come into force needed to be fixed. A period of at least four weeks from today was requested by officers to allow for the printing of the revised fare table and other administrative processes.

The Secretary of the NTHCA, Mr Sneedon, was in attendance in the public gallery and the Chair informed the committee that she had agreed to his request to address the committee in response to the objections. Mr Sneedon explained that as Secretary of the NTHCA he always requested an increase on behalf of his members; fuel prices and insurance had increased; and that the tariff was a maximum charge, individual drivers could charge a lower fee to passengers if they wanted.

Members acknowledged and considered the objections and then discussed the options available to them and made comments. Comments made included that a hackney carriage would always be more expensive than a private hire car because of the convenience of being able to hail one in the street and that the table only showed the maximum charge permitted.

Resolved that the variation of the table of fares as agreed at the 29 November 2016 meeting and shown above would come into force on 27 February 2017.

(Prior to the consideration of this item Councillor John Hunter left the meeting and took no part in the decision making on this matter.)