

# **APPLICATION BY MR. SIRVAN SINGH AND MR JOSEPH LEWIS -OWEN TO LICENCE PEDAL CYCLE RICKSHAWS (SILKIN RICKSHAW) AS HACKNEY CARRIAGES IN TELFORD.**

## **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the suggested policy & appropriate regulations to cover the operational activities of Silkin Rickshaw trading as a Hackney Carriage; all the information needed to obtain a Hackney Carriage will be outlined below. A Rickshaw is essentially an unmotorised tricycle powered by one human on the front, whilst up to three fare paying passengers can be transported on the rear seat.

## **Proposal**

Mr. Singh and Mr. Lewis – Owen intend to operate three Rickshaws along routes such as The Silkin Way and Ironbridge. All routes have been predetermined. Two Rickshaws will be fully utilised in the first year whilst the third will be kept as a back up in case of breakdown. Mr. Singh and Mr. Lewis – Owen will be developing a series of presentations to accompany the Rickshaw journey.

Silkin Rickshaw is a sustainable, independent business venture operated by two young entrepreneurs with support from a local business development organisation and skilled mentors.

The principals:

- **Local Employment:** The applicants can show that self employment is a productive route out of the current difficult youth unemployment that blights not only this Borough, but the country
- **Telford Regeneration:** Silkin Rickshaw can be a part of the new attractions in Telford (The Southwater park project) as well as a reconnection to the historic, under used asset that Telford boasts, the longest cycle path in Great Britain - The Silkin Way.
- **Climate Change** – Rickshaws are CO2 friendly and a sustainable transportation vehicle.
- **Tourism** – An opportunity at no cost to the Council to enhance the visitor experience in Telford.
- **Scenery** – Showcase and promote a superb, historic environment.
- **Health Benefits** – A Rickshaw trip would encourage people to explore the great outdoors and reap the health benefits via fun exercise!

## **Routes**

All of the designated routes are based upon existing cycle ways, see attached (Silkin Rickshaw Routes) document for full details of all routes.

## **Riders**

All Rickshaws riders will need to meet the following requirements:

- Aged 18 or over.
- Fluent English speaker.
- Hold full UK driving license.
- Holder of Hackney Carriage License.

- Obtained National Cycle Standard – Level 3: This independent qualification is the nearest equivalent to a motor vehicle driving license, and demonstrates that a Rickshaw rider has completed a competence based qualification that is relevant to the type of vehicle being ridden. Public Carriage Office June 2006.
- Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checked
- Pass physical fitness test – Having considered various alternative means of assessing the physical fitness of rickshaw riders, the City Council’s Licensing Team is of the opinion that rickshaw riders will be required to undertake the same medical examination currently required of black cab and private hire drivers to determine whether they are acceptably fit.
- Undertake routine repairs i.e. mend punctures, replace tyres and batteries.

## **Fares**

A sample of fares and tariffs applied by some of the established UK rickshaw operators/riders are set out below.

### Licensed Rickshaw Hackney Carriage Operators:

- Hereford Rickshaws – operated on a Tip what you think its worth basis.
- South Lakeland – Maximum fare of £6.50 per each half hour.
- Durham Rickshaws - £3 per journey (within City Centre); £8 per half guided tour; £200 per day private hire, includes rider up to 8 hours (up to 3 people).

### Non Hackney Carriage Licensed Operators or Licensing Authority:

- The Cornish Rickshaw Co. – operated on a Tip what you think its worth basis.
- Edinburgh Rickshaws (B-Spokes.com) – Sightseeing Tour lasting 1hr 30mins = £35 per person (minimum 2 people). History Tour lasting 1hr 30mins = £35 per person (minimum 2 people).
- Shrewsbury (Shropshire Council) (license application) - £20 per hour; £60 per half day (4 hours); £100 per day (8 hours); £2.50 per person for a ride around the Quarry; £1.50 per person for any single trip within the loop of the river; £1.50 per person per mile for longer trips.
- Scarborough (East Lindsay District Council) (license application) – Enquiries have been made with other local authorities and the average single maximum fare adopted is between £8 and £10. It is recommended that a single maximum fare be set of £8 per each half an hour or part there of for each hiring (not per passenger).
- Transports for London – The majority of trips [in Rickshaws] were perceived to be under a mile with an average fare of £11.67.
- York City Council – Fares will be subject to a minimum charge of £3. Durham,
- East Lindsey and Herefordshire have successfully licensed Rickshaws as hackney carriages. (March 2008)
- Rickshaw Media.co.uk (London) – Bookings are made 24hrs in advance: between 1–15 minutes = £25; between 16-30 minutes = £40; between 31-45 minutes = £50; between 46-60 minutes = £55; above one hour each additional 15 minutes will be charged at £10.
- Cardiff City Council – Cardiff has a large fleet of pedal rickshaws which are free to visitors (a tip to the driver is usual). In Cardiff the local authority would not accept the Rickshaws at all unless they were licensed as Hackney Carriages. This was seen as unreasonable as the current regulations are written with motor vehicles in mind and the licenses were prohibitively

expensive. The operators responded by offering free rides and making their income through advertising.

**The proposed prices for Silkin Rickshaw have been predetermined on routes the price range would be between £6.00 and £30.00**

### **Safety**

It is acknowledged that public safety is of paramount importance in terms of personal safety of passengers, riders and other users of the pedestrian/cycleway upon which the Silkin Rickshaw proposal would operate.

### **Mitigation measures**

- The license holder to ensure that the rickshaws comply with the Pedal Cycle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1983.
- Lap belt - A lap belt shall be fitted to the rear seat in all licensed rickshaws. They shall be readily accessible for use by all passengers and shall be maintained in good condition and a useable state of repair at all times. The rider of a rickshaw shall ensure that passengers are offered the safety/lap belt before commencing a journey. If a passenger is a child i.e. under the age of 14, they will be required to wear a seat belt at all times).
- Lights - front and rear
- Indicators - handlebar mounted
- Bell.
- Training – In order to obtain a Rickshaw hackney carriage license, each rickshaw rider is required to pass The National Standard for Cycle Training Level 3, and hold a current full UK driving license. Each rider will also be required to undertake specific training provided by the Silkin Rickshaw operator in how to operate the rickshaw in a safe and controlled manner.
- Independent annual inspection of each rickshaw to be undertaken by local cycle shop authorised by Telford City Council's Licensing Team. A copy of the rickshaw manufacturer's maintenance manual has been produced for the purpose of assisting the mechanics at the authorised cycle shop. All costs in respect of the vehicle test will be borne by the proprietor of the rickshaw.
- Onboard toolkit to include: First Aid Kit; puncture repair kit; bicycle pump; wheel jack; rain cover; blanket; torch and range of spare batteries. Although there would be no requirement for rickshaws to carry this equipment they would be carried by each rickshaw on a voluntary basis and in line with good practice.

Alterations to equipment, dimensions or other specifications on the rickshaws will not be permitted without the prior consent of an authorized officer of the Licensing Authority. For the avoidance of doubt alterations includes both additions to and the removal of any equipment in, or on, any licensed rickshaws.

It is recommended that the following daily safety checks are carried out on the rickshaws by each of their respective riders prior to the start of each shift:

1. Make sure all tyres are at 60psi (4 bar); check tyres have useable tread and are in generally good condition.
2. Check front brake is operating properly and examine brake pads for wear.
3. Check rear brakes are operating properly and that the brake pads are in good condition.
4. Safety guards: ensure that all safety guards are in place. This includes the wheel discs, wheel guards, and the diff guard.
5. Lights and Bell: both of these items should be working.
6. Safety Belts: check these are functioning properly.

It is the rider's responsibility to ensure the safety of passengers at all times.

Rickshaw riders must not carry passengers if they are likely to endanger themselves or the rickshaw, this includes passengers who are:

- Drunk;
- Uncontrollable or who refuse to accept the rickshaw riders instructions;
- Carrying unsuitable luggage that cannot be safely stowed;
- Too heavy for the 250kg payload limit;
- Disabled in such a way that the seat is unsuitable for them; and
- Minors who may not have the consent of their parent or guardian to travel.

Rickshaw riders should make sure that their passengers have seen the safety notices behind the passenger handlebar and advise their passengers that they should keep limbs, luggage and loose clothing within the seating area, and remain seated at all times and that they are not to attempt to disembark until the rider has stopped the rickshaw and informed them it is safe to do so. If passengers wish to attract the attention of the rider during the journey then they should be instructed to do so verbally and in no circumstances try and tap the rider on the shoulder.

### **Equalities Impact**

The rickshaws would be available for hire to all residents and visitors to Telford. However, unlike most existing hackney carriages, they will not be accessible to wheelchair users.

If the rickshaws are to be licensed, they must be licensed as hackney carriages. However, Part V of the Disability Discrimination Act 1996 requires that new taxis be wheelchair accessible from January 2002; rickshaws clearly cannot meet this requirement. Some local authorities have licensed hackney carriages where this requirement has not been enforced. This was said to be due to the government's failure to provide a model specification for wheelchair accessible hackney carriages.

### **Insurance**

Before the licensed vehicle is used such insurance or securities as are required under Part V1 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 shall be obtained in respect of the vehicle and the certificate in respect of the policy of insurance shall be produced to the Licensing Section for inspection. The policy must show that the vehicles are suitably insured for hire and reward purposes. The license holder shall notify the Council of any change of insurer or any change to the insurance particulars and shall provide full details thereof within two working days of such change. There must be in place Third Party Public Liability Insurance (minimum £1,000,000 - one million pounds for any one event).

## **Advertising**

The position of advertising on the rickshaws is to be inspected and approved in writing by Telford & Wrekin Council's Licensing Team before any advertising is displayed on the rickshaws.

The content of the advertisements will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Non-sexual
- Non-religious
- Non-political
- Non-discriminatory
- Not to cause public offence
- Not misleading
- No cigarette advertising
- No alcohol advertising
- Location does not distract from council vehicle signs
- Not to obscure vision of the rider

## **Smoking**

The same No Smoking policy would apply to rickshaws as they do for regular hackney carriages.

## **Consultations**

During the pre-application feasibility study the following individuals, organisations and regulatory bodies were consulted:

- Rights of Way Officer (Highways) – Telford Council
- Licensing Officer – Telford Council
- Telford Town Park Manager

## **Conclusion**

### **The Silkin Rickshaw proposal will:**

- Create a new and high profile start up business in Telford operated by young entrepreneurs
- Be privately financed
- Operate along designated pedestrian/cycle networks
- Operate along pre-determined routes
- Enhance the tourism potential of Telford
- Provide a low carbon sustainable transport service
- Operate in accordance with the proposed conditions
- Provide an opportunity for greater connectivity in Telford
- Provide a safe, comfortable, efficient and informative service to fee paying members of the public whilst they enjoy the panoramic views of the natural and historic environment.