

This report will be made public on 20 June 2022

Report Number **DCL/22/15**

To: Planning & Licensing Committee
Date: 28th June 2022
Status: Non Executive Decision
Head of Service: Ewan Green – Director of Place

Subject: HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

SUMMARY: This report considers changes in the Hackney Carriage Fares. The maximum fare that Hackney Drivers can charge whilst they are working in the District is set by the Council. The last fare increase was made in 2012. The Council has received representations from local taxi trade requesting an increase to the maximum taxi fares.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning & Licensing Committee is asked to agree the recommendations set out below to assist the taxi trade financially.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To receive and note Report DCL/22/15.
- To approve the proposed increase in taxi fares and for the fares to go out for public consultation.
- If no objections are received, for the new fares come into force at end of consultation.
- If objections are received the Committee would review the objections and publish the fees with or without modifications at their discretion. .

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Drivers are regulated by the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as well as Byelaws made under Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Section 171 of the Public Health Act 1875.
- 1.2. The maximum fare that Hackney Drivers can charge whilst they are working in the District is set by the Council. The last fare increase was made in 2012.
- 1.3. The recent cost of living and fuel price increases are the main reasons for the fare increase request by the Taxi Trade. The cost of petrol has increased by approximately 38% since 2012 from £1.34 to £1.85 per litre and for diesel it has increased by approximately 35% from £1.40 to £1.90 per litre for diesel. We received a request from the trade to consider increasing the maximum fare, this consisted of a petition from 28 drivers and separate emails from 6 other drivers.
- 1.4. The Taxi Trade in Folkestone & Hythe District provides a high quality service and adheres to the highest safety standards. The increases highlighted in paragraph 1.3 may have an adverse affect on the quality of service the trade can provide. Due to the pandemic we have also seen drivers leave the profession to undertake other jobs and therefore the taxi trade is somewhat depleted, often leaving companies struggling to fulfill school runs and evening pick-ups.
- 1.5. It is proposed that we increase the baseline Hackney tariff by 10% to ensure a balance between the increased costs for drivers and the impact on customers if the fare rises too much.
- 1.6. The following table shows the comparison of the proposed Folkestone & Hythe fare increase against the latest fare tariff of the bordering Local Authorities, being Canterbury, Ashford, Dover and Rother. This is the maximum fare that drivers can charge, they can charge less than this.

	Folkestone & Hythe Proposed	Folkestone & Hythe Current	Canterbury (Proposed)	Dover	Ashford	Rother
Maximum fare the meter starts at	£3.30	£3.00	£4.00	£3.40	£2.90	£3.00
Distance starting fare covers (yards)	586	586	220	400	680	152
Drop distance (yards)	195.5	195.5	98	103.5	157	185.3
Number of drops in 1 st mile after starting distance (approx.)	6	6	16	13	7	8
Number of drops in subsequent miles (approx.)	9	9	18	17	11	10
Price per drop	£0.22	£0.20	£0.10	£0.10	£0.20	£0.20
Late night/early morning extra charge	1.5 x rate 1 (00:00 to 06:00)	1.5 x rate 1 (00:00 to 06:00)	1.5 x rate 1 (23:00 to 07:00)	1.5 x rate 1 (00:00 to 06:00)	1.5 x rate 1 (00:00 to 07:00)	£1.40 (after 22.30) + £0.10 per drop
Sunday/Bank holiday Extra charge	1.5 x rate 1 (BH)	£1.00 (Sun & BH)	1.5 x rate 1 (BH)	£1.00 (Sun & BH)	1.5 x rate 1 (BH)	1.5 x rate 1 (BH)
Each article of luggage	£0.22	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£0.05 (£0.10 dogs)	£0.20 (dogs)
Each person in excess of one	£0.22	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20
Waiting Time (£/h)	£22.00	£20.00	£20.00	£21.00	£14.40	£24.40
Christmas Eve to Boxing Day and New Year's Eve to New Year's Day	2 x rate 1	2 x rate 1	2 x rate 1	2 x rate 1	2 x rate 1	£5.80 + 2 x drop rate
Start Time for Xmas/NYE Extra Charge	18:00	18:00	23:00	18:00	all day	all day
Soiling charge max	£50.00	£25.00	£100.00	£50.00	No charge listed	£55
1 st mile normal time	£4.62	£4.20	£5.60	£4.70	£4.30	£4.60
Fare per mile after 1st mile	£1.98	£1.80	£1.80	£1.70	£2.20	£2.00
2 miles normal time	£6.60	£6.00	£7.40	£6.40	£6.50	£6.60
1 st mile after midnight	£6.93	£6.30	£8.40	£7.05	£6.45	£6.80
2 miles after midnight	£9.90	£9.00	£11.10	£9.60	£9.75	£9.80

- 1.7. The data in table 1 shows that the proposed fare increases are inline with our bordering authority fares.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO FARES

- 2.1. To allow the following changes to the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff:
 - Increase the meter starting fare from £3.00 to £3.30
 - Increase the price per drop from £0.20 to £0.22
 - Change the extra charge on Sunday and Bank Holidays from £1 to be 1.5 x Rate 1 on Bank Holidays only which is more in-line with other Districts
 - Change waiting time from £0.20 every 36 seconds to £0.22 every 36 seconds

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. Under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, it states that if no objections to the fare proposals are received then the fares should go live at the end of the consultation period. If objections are received during the consultation period, and are not withdrawn, the proposal needs to be reconsidered.
- 3.2. The Planning & Licensing Committee are asked to approve the proposed fares and approve for the fares to go out to consultation to the trade and members of the public.
- 3.3. The proposed maximum fares will be advertised in a local newspaper, on our website and at the Civic Centre noticeboard. The trade will be contacted by email.
- 3.4. The consultation period will be for a total of 4 weeks to ensure a swift decision (a minimum of 2 weeks consultation is required under the Act).
- 3.5. If objections are received regarding the proposed fares the proposal will be brought back to the next available Planning & Licensing Committee for reconsideration. In accordance with the Act, the fares would then be published with or without modifications as decided by the Committee after considering the objections.
- 3.6. At the end of the consultation, if no objections are received then the proposed fares will be published after the consultation date. Taxi drivers with a meter (including Private Hire drivers with a meter) will need to have their meter rates adjusted in accordance with the new maximum fare.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1. A summary of the perceived risks follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Decrease in the quality of service provided to customers	High	Medium	To approve the proposed increase in taxi fares and if no objections are received to implement the new fares
Decrease in Taxi Fleet	High	Medium	To approve the proposed increase in taxi fares and if no objections are received to implement the new fares

5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

5.1. Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to vary the table of fares in connection with the hire of a hackney carriage. The Council is legally obliged to publicise in a local newspaper, details of any variations to the table of fares, and to consider any objections received.

5.2. Finance Officer's Comments (TM)

There are no finance implications relating to this report.

5.3. Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no diversity and equality implications relating to this report.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Briony Williamson, Licensing Specialist

Telephone: 01303 853475

Email: briony.williamson@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk