

REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES 2022

REPORT OF: Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is for the Licensing Committee to consider an application from a section of the Taxi trade requesting an increase in the Hackney Carriage fares.

Recommendations

- 2 **Members are recommended to consider the request to either:**
 - (a) **Agree with the submitted proposal and amend and increase the tariff by the requested amounts**
 - (b) **Consider an alternative increase to the existing three tariffs**
 - (c) **Consider no increase to the tariff**
 - (d) **Review the request in 6 months**
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Background

- 3 The fares charged by Hackney Carriages are set and regulated by the Council. There is a set tariff for journeys and drivers are not permitted to charge more than the metered fare, although they could charge less if they wished. The Council does not have any ability to regulate the fare in respect of Private Hire vehicles.
- 4 Station Taxis of Burgess Hill, a Private Hire Company which has a mix of licensed Private Hire and Hackney vehicles, have approached the Council to request an increase in the Hackney Carriage fares (Letter Appendix 1) on behalf of a section of the Hackney trade.
- 5 It is noted that Station Taxis have already adopted the proposed new tariff system for their Private Hire vehicles. The Taxis working on their circuit use the existing tariff.
- 6 Ordinarily the Mid Sussex Taxi Association (MSTA) are the recognised channel of communication for such fare increases. MSTA has not been an active Association since 2018.
- 7 Station Taxis conducted an initial petition of interested parties within the Taxi and Private Hire trade and then made representations for a fare increase direct to the Licensing Department. This was on the grounds that there had only been one rise in the previous seven years (in 2018), and there has been a general increase in the cost of living, fuel, and car maintenance costs over the past 3 years.

- 8 There have been additional costs to the Hackney trade due to the introduction of the Statutory Standards, the roll out of mandatory training and the planned introduction of CCTV in vehicles. There has also been a loss of income due to the effects of the pandemic.
- 9 Following the submission by Station Taxis the Licensing Department wrote to all Hackney Carriage Vehicle licence holders to canvas their views regarding this fare increase. A total of 134 vehicle licence holders were contacted. Individuals holding more than one vehicle licence received one letter. A total of 67 vehicle owners responded. Of these responses 37 (55%) were in favour of a fare increase and 30 (45%) against a fare increase.
- 10 During this process a number of drivers submitted comments with their response both for and against the proposal. These have been collated and anonymised and are attached within the appendices.
- 11 Currently there are 3 tariffs in use. The current proposal is for two additional tariffs for drivers working unsocial hours at the weekend. There is also the proposal to increase the waiting time periods and waiting time charge.
- 12 Attached to the report is an explanation as to how these changes are likely to affect fares during the day and evening time.
- 13 The current tariff is shown as Appendix 1, and the proposed tariff is shown as Appendix 2

Policy Context

- 14 By virtue of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Transport Act 1985 the Council is required to administer and enforce the activities of Hackney Carriages throughout the district.
- 15 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides the power and mechanism for the local authority to set fares for Hackney Carriages.

Section 65 Fixing of fares for hackney carriages.

(1) A district council may fix the rates or fares within the district as well for time as distance, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle or with the arrangements for the hire of a vehicle, to be paid in respect of the hire of hackney carriages by means of a table (hereafter in this section referred to as a "table of fares") made or varied in accordance with the provisions of this section.

Financial Implications

- 16 Amendments to the Hackney Carriage tariffs cost the Council approximately £900 for advertising the changes in the local newspapers. This cost is met within the existing budget.

Risk Management Implications

- 17 In accordance with the Councils Risk Management Strategy, consideration had been given to the potential risks associated with the recommendations

set out in this report. The proposed changes will be advertised in the local newspapers and on the Council website so that members of the public will be given ample opportunity to submit representations. These will be considered prior to implementation.

Sustainability Implications

18 None identified.

Other Material Implications

19 None identified.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Letter and email from Station Taxis

Appendix 2 - Comments submitted by drivers

Appendix 3 - Current Fare Tariff

Appendix 4 - Proposed Fare Tariff

Appendix 5 - Comparison between current and proposed tariff