

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE 3		
DATE:	6 FEBRUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	REVISION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES FOR THE YEAR 2019/20		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	
		CULTURE, SPORT AND CONSUMER SERVICES	
SERVICE:	PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 From time to time the hackney carriage trade requests that the Council increases the amount they can charge their customers for transportation to their desired destinations, the last of which was in August 2017. This report sets out the recent history of fare rises and current levels of fares in Reading.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you consider the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That, if you consider it appropriate to approve an increase in the hackney carriage fares, you recommend the appropriate increase to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, subject to no objections being received as a result of advertising the proposed increase in a local newspaper.

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services has delegated authority to approve and implement hackney carriage fare rises, having taken into account any recommendations expressed by the Licensing Applications Committee or Licensing Applications Sub-Committee 3.

3.2 The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services also has delegated authority to advertise hackney carriage fare rises in a local newspaper, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

3.3 Currently in Reading hackney carriage fares are set by the Licensing Committee and all journeys taking place within Reading are paid in accordance with the fares set on the vehicle meter at the end of a journey.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position

4.1.0 Hackney carriage fares were last reviewed by the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee 3 at their August 2017 meeting. The fare increase agreed at this meeting related to the drop down charge for both day and evening charges. The committee granted a 20 pence rise for both tariffs, no other charges were changed. A copy of the current table of fares is included in background papers as Appendix I.

4.1.1 The chair of the Reading Taxi Association (RTA) has written to the licensing section requesting the fare rise as set out in Appendix II.

4.1.2 Reading Cab Drivers Association (RCDA) was consulted on the proposal from the RTA and the response is in Appendix IV.

4.1.3 Attached as Appendix III is a copy of the National Fare table which is collated by the magazine Private Hire Taxi Monthly (PHTM), the table indicates fares charged in other local authorities and their position in terms of fares charged.

4.2 Options Proposed

4.2.1 The RTA has proposed a fare increase which rather than increasing the flag drop as in previous years, proposes a decrease in the yardage for day time fares only. There is no proposal to decrease the yardage for night time fares. After the flag drop, yardage is proposed to be reduced from 145yds (0-2miles) and 140yds (over 2miles) to 133yds (proposal 1) and 134yds (proposal 2) for all day time distances which equates to an average increase of 3.50% (proposal 1) and 3.99% (proposal 2) over day time fares. As there is no proposal to reduce the yardage for night time fares, the overall average percentage over day and night fares equate reduce to 1.75% (proposal 1) and 1.99% (proposal 2).

4.3 Other options to be considered

4.3.1 After taking into consideration the proposals as set out in this report the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee may decide not to recommend any changes to hackney carriage fares.

4.3.2 After taking into consideration the proposals as set out in this report the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee may request that officers provide a

further report providing specified options for differing levels of percentage increase.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The hackney carriage trade provides a valuable service to the public by being available to transport customers throughout the borough on a 24-hour basis.

5.2 Equal Opportunities

The regulation of hackney carriage fares is one control, which the Council exercises over the use of hackney carriages in Reading. Such controls benefit all sections of the community. The hackney carriage trade provides a valuable service to disabled members of the community, particularly wheelchair users.

5.3 Sustainable Implications

The provision of an adequate number of controlled hackney carriages will encourage the economy of the town and hackney carriages form part of the integrated transport system for the borough. With the availability of an improved public transport system, there will be a reduced need for private motor vehicles, thereby contributing to an improved environment.

5.4 Community Safety Implications

The provision of high quality, controlled hackney carriages, the drivers of which are vetted, allows the public to travel in safety. This reduces both the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Proposed changes to hackney carriage fares are legally required to be advertised in a local newspaper, allowing any person to object to the changes.

6.2 If objections are submitted these must be considered before any fare changes can be implemented.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An equality assessment is not required in respect of the increase of hackney carriage fares.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 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 variation to the table of fares, and to consider any objections received by way of a further hearing, if they are not withdrawn.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The cost of publishing the required notices is allowed for in existing budgets.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix I - Current and proposed Table of Fares
- Appendix II - Letter from the vice chair of the Reading Taxi Association
- Appendix III - National fares table
- Appendix IV - Response from RTA on Fare Increase