

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE 3		
DATE:	12 JULY 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	REVISION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES FOR THE YEAR 2022/23		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Tony Page	PORTFOLIO: CULTURE, SPORT AND CONSUMER SERVICES	
SERVICE:	PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	CLYDE MASSON	TEL:	07710664077
JOB TITLE:	PRINCIPAL LICENSING & ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	E-MAIL:	clyde.masson@reading.gov.uk

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 February 2020. 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 Director of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, subject to no objections being received as a result of advertising the proposed increase in a local newspaper
- 2.3 That, if you consider it appropriate to approve an increase in the soiling charge for cleaning taxis you recommend the appropriate increase to the Director of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Director 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 Director 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 February 2020 meeting. The fare increase agreed at this meeting related to the yardage travelled as part of the fare calculated in line with the table of fares tariffs for daytime only. There was no increase in fare for the night-time tariff. The committee granted a reduction in the yardage for daytime fares to 133 yards for all day-time fares, no other charges were changed. The current table of fares tariff is attached in the background papers as Appendix 1.
- 4.1.1 The current charge available to drivers if a customer soils the taxi is £40 for the inside and £10 for the exterior. These charges have not changed for many years and do not reflect the clean up costs and time lost by drivers.
- 4.1.2 The chair of the Reading Taxi Association (RTA) has written to the licensing section requesting the fare rise as set out in Appendix II. The Taxi trade has also requested a change to the cost for cleaning their taxis when customers have soiled the taxi. A copy of this request is included as appendix II.
- 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. The most up to date edition of PHTM places Reading's fares at number 11 in the National league tables. Any update to these tables will be provided to the committee at the time of the hearing.
- 4.1.4 The RAC provides a history of fuel pricing on their website which plots the rise of both diesel and petrol pricing since 2004 up to date. Their data shows the following increases. Any updates to these figures will be provided to the committee at the time of the hearing.

<https://www.racfoundation.org/data/uk-pump-prices-over-time>

	May 2019	Down	May 2020	Up	May 2021	Up	May 2022
Diesel	£1.35.47	-23.5p	£1.11.86	19.5p	£1.31.33	50p	£1.81.48
Petrol	£1.30.43	-23.5p	£1.06.69	22.5p	£1.28.96	40.5p	£1.69.52

4.2 Options Proposed

4.2.1 The RTA has proposed a fare increase on the flag drop rather than a decrease in yardage as in 2020. The Flag Drop is the standard hire fare a customer will pay before commencing their journey which includes the first 300 yards (274.32 meters) or 2 minutes 36 seconds of the journey. Thereafter the yardage is paid at £0.20p per 133 yards for the distance of journey travelled.

4.2.2 Option 1. To increase the flag drop by £1.00 on both daytime and night-time tariffs. Day tariff is currently £2.60 which would increase to £3.60 and the Night-time tariff is currently £3.60 which would increase to £4.60.

4.2.3 Soiling charges to rise to £70 for inside the taxi and £25 for the outside of the taxi.

4.3 Other options to be considered

4.3.1 Option 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 and soiling charges.

4.3.2 Option 3. Proposed by the trade if option 1 is not accepted. To increase the flag drop by £0.60p on both daytime and night-time tariffs. Daytime would increase from £2.60 to £3.20 and night-time tariff from £3.60 to £4.20. Soiling charges to rise to £70 for inside the taxi and £25 for the outside of the taxi.

4.3.3 Option 4. After taking into consideration the proposals the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee may decide not to recommend any changes to hackney carriage fares or soiling charges.

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. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific environmental or climate implications to this policy.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

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

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

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 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.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix I	-	Current and proposed table of fares
Appendix II	-	Letter from the chair Reading Taxi Association
Appendix III	-	National fares table