



13 July 2023

Title	Hackney Carriage Fare Increase
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Groves, Senior Licensing & Enforcement Officer
Lead Councillor	Councillor John Ennis
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee consider the content of the report. 2. That the proposals put forward by the Reading Taxi Association, as set out in Appendix 2, to amend the taxi fares scheme, be considered. 3. That the proposals put forward by the drivers not affiliated to the RTA, as set out in Appendix 3, to amend the taxi fares scheme, be considered. 4. That, in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, and having taken into account the representations of the Reading Taxi Association (RTA) and the Hackney Carriage Drivers not affiliated to the RTA, the Committee be asked to approve a new taxi fares scheme for consultation via an advert in a local paper and the Council's website. 5. That the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport & Public Protection Services be authorised to implement the new taxi fares scheme, unless there were objections to the scheme received during the consultation period, in which case a further report would be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

1. 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 4th October 2022. This report sets out the recent history of fare rises and current levels of fares in Reading.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Director of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services 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. and include anything else which is relevant by way of Policy to this matter.

- 2.3 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.

3 The Proposal

- 3.1 Hackney carriage fares were reviewed by the Licensing Applications Committee at their October 2022 meeting. The committee granted an increase of £1 on the flag drop for both the day and night-time tariffs from £2.60 to £3.60 and £3.60 to £4.60 respectively. The table of fares tariff agreed at this meeting are attached in the Appendices as Appendix I.
- 3.2 The current charge available to drivers if a customer soils the taxi is £70 for the inside and £25 for the exterior. This was changed at the July 2022 committee meeting of the Licensing Applications Committee. These charges can be found within the table of fares as set out in Appendix I. There has been no request from the HC trade to increase these charges.
- 3.3 On the 4th June 2023 the chair of the Reading Taxi Association (RTA) wrote to the licensing section requesting that a report be put before the committee for a fare rise and supplied two options for consideration these are set out in Appendix II(a) and (b).
- 3.4 On 23rd June 2023 the Hackney Carriage Drivers who are not members of the RTA led by Mr Imran Ali, Mr Mohammad Afsar and Mr Johar Ali also requested a fare increase and supplied two options for the consideration of the Licensing Applications Committee and these are set out at Appendix III (a) and (b).
- 3.5 To assist the committee Appendix III(c) is the current fare chart that has been re-worked to an easier to comprehend version by Mr CJ & JT Fennessey who are the authors of all the 4 options that have been put forward.
- 3.6 As required under Section 65. of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 a consultation will be carried out following the approval of one of the options put before the Licensing Applications Committee with an advert being placed in a local paper and on the RBC website.
- 3.7 If no objections are received following the consultation, then the new fares will take effect once arrangements can be made to have the hackney carriage meters re-chipped with the new fares.
- 3.8 If any objections are received, then these will be brought at a meeting before the Licensing Applications Committee for due consideration.
- 3.9 In the June 2023 edition of the Private Hire Taxi Monthly (PHTM) has been published, and in this edition on pages 80 & 81 the National Fare Table places, Reading in 12th, Wokingham in 31st, South Oxfordshire 37th, West Berkshire 51st, Bracknell Forest in 56th and Windsor & Maidenhead 141st position. [PHTM June 2023 Issue 369 \(yudu.com\)](https://www.yudu.com)
- 3.10 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 this date. Their data shows the following decreases since the last report presented to the committee in October 2022.

	Oct 2022	Down	Dec 2022	Down	Feb 2023	Down	Apr 2023	Down	June 2023
Diesel	£1.90.12	-15.24p	£1.74.88	6.89p	£1.67.99	7.95p	£1.60.04	14.74p	£1.45.30
Petrol	£1.66.17	-13.99p	£1.52.18	4.18p	£1.48.00	1.32p	£1.46.68	3.4p	£1.43.28

- 3.11 Tables showing the cost of fares over set distances for all the options has been produced and is shown at Appendix IV(a) - (e). Please note the fares that have been calculated are approximate and have not been verified as being 100% correct using a HC Meter. Also please note that any fares outside of the Borough can be agreed between the HCD and customer without the use of the meter before the journey commences.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 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.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

There is no specific environmental or climate implication to this policy as any fare rise is likely to reduce customer usage due to the increased cost in the fares.

6. Community Engagement

- 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 any objections are received following the publication in the local newspaper and inclusion on the RBC Taxi Licensing webpages then they will be submitted to the Licensing Applications Committee, and these must be considered before any fare changes can be implemented.

7. Equality Implications

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

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 N/A

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 Section 65 (1) A district council may fix the rate or fares within the district as well for time and distance, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle or with the arrangements for 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 "table of fares") made or varied in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- 9.2 Section 65 (2) (a) When a district council make or vary a table of fares they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice setting out the table of fares or the variation thereof and specifying the period, which shall not be less than fourteen days from the date of the first publication of the notice, within which and the manner in which objections to the table of fares or variation can be made.
- 9.3 Section 65 (2) (b) A copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall for the period of fourteen days from the date of the first publication thereof be deposited at the offices of the council which published the notice and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.
- 9.4 Section 65 (3) If no objections to a table of fares or variation is duly made within the period specified, in the notice referred to in subsection (2) of this section, or if all objections so made are withdrawn, the table of fares or variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection or, if more than one, of the last objection, whichever date is the later.
- 9.5 Section 65 (4) If an objection is duly made as aforesaid and is not withdrawn, the district council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the table of fares shall come into force with or without modifications as decided by them after consideration of the objections.
- 9.6 Section 65 (5) A table of fares made or varied under this section shall have effect for the purposes of the Act of 1847 as if it were included in hackney carriage byelaws made thereunder.

10. Financial Implications

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

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1 The fare option that is chosen by Councillors will be advertised in the local press for 14 days at which time if there are no representations then the new fees will take effect as soon as the licensing team can organise the re-chipping of all the HC meters. If there are representations received, then a further report will have to be brought before the full committee for their consideration at which point, and after all due consideration of the representations received, they can ask either for further work to be carried out or make the decision that their original decision of the 13th July takes effect.

12. Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

Appendices.

1. Table of fares agreed at the October 2022 Licensing Applications Committee.
2. Two options proposed by the Reading Taxi Association.
3. Two options proposed by non-Reading Taxi Association Hackney Carriage Drivers.
- 3(c). The re-worked current fare table by Mr Fennessey.
4. Tables showing the cost of fares over set distances for all the options proposed (a) – (d).
- 4(e). Table showing the re-worked current fare table by Mr Fennessey.