

SUBJECT:	<i>Review of Hackney Carriage Fares</i>
RELEVANT MEMBER:	<i>Councillor Liz Walsh, Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Martin Holt, Head of Healthy Communities</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Charlie Robinson, Licensing Manager,</i> charlie.robinson@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not Ward Specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 For Members to consider requested amendments to the current table of passenger fares for Chiltern District Council hackney carriages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Licensing Committee is asked to consider:

a) Whether an increase in the fares is appropriate at this time

If it is considered appropriate;

a) Recommend to the Head of Healthy Communities to accept or refuse the proposed increase in the table of fares set out in options 1 and 2 at Appendix 2 and to consult with the taxi meter companies and advertise the rate accordingly.

b) if no objections are received, any agreed increase to the table of fares set out in either option 1 or 2 in Appendix 2 to become effective at the conclusion of the consultation period.

c) that any objections received be considered by the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee and approve the revised Table of Fares with or without modification, and the approved table of fares to come into effect on 27th March 2020.

2. Reason for Recommendations

2.1 The Trade has requested an increase in the fares currently charged for Hackney Carriages. The Head of Healthy Communities has delegated authority to consider

reviews of the fares table in consultation with the Licensing Committee. Therefore, the views of the Licensing Committee are being sought upon this request.

3. Executive summary

- 3.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ("the 1976 Act") gives the Council power to set fares within the district for the time and distance travelled and all other charges in connection with the hire of hackney carriages. Such fares are specified in a "table of fares" which maybe varied from time to time.
- 3.2 Hackney Carriage Drivers are at liberty to charge fares lower than the specified table of fares, but are not permitted to charge higher fares for journeys taking place within the district. Journeys ending outside of the district or commencing outside of the district due to the driver undertaking a pre-booked journey do not need to be charged in accordance with the approved fare chart.
- 3.3 The law requires any change to the "table of fares" must be advertised publicly in at least one local newspaper for a period of not less than 14 days before the proposed change takes effect. The public notice must also be available at the Council offices for inspection free of charge at all reasonable hours during the consultation period.
- 3.4 The Head of Healthy Communities seeks the views of the Licensing Committee in order to determine the table of fares, and if approved, advertises the proposals in the local press, in accordance with legislative requirements. A copy of the proposed table of fares is also sent to all Hackney Carriage licence holders and the trade organisation representing them.
- 3.5 If no objections are received during the consultation period, then the changes outlined in the table of fares (Appendix 2) if approved will come into effect on a date to be stated in the public notice. If objections are received and not withdrawn, it is recommended that they be considered by the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee. Then a decision is made to set a date for the proposed changes to the table of fares (with or without modification having taken into account any such objections) to take effect not later than 2 months from the original effective date stated in the public notice referred to in paragraph 2.3 above.
- 3.6 The Council last varied its table of fares in April 2012. A request for a review was received from the Trade in 2016 and considered by the then Licensing & Regulatory Committee on 28th June 2016. Members requested further information from the Trade at that time and the tables of fares remained unchanged. A copy of the current approved fare chart is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Content of the Report

4.1 Representatives of the hackney carriage trade have written to the Council requesting that the table of fares be varied to increase the 'flag' rate i.e. the starting fee for all journeys to £3.50. This represents a 50p uplift from the current rates of £3.00. They have also submitted two proposals to reduce the distance & time before each incremental increase to the fare. The full request is attached in Appendix 2.

4.2 A comparison of current hackney carriage fares for a selection of local authorities situated relatively close to Chiltern District Council can be seen at Appendix 3. This table shows that the fare levels in Chiltern are currently set at a relatively similar level to other authorities in the area. The average 'flag' rate locally is shown to be £2.83.

4.3 Chiltern's Tariff 1 fare is currently equal to £5.40 for 2 miles. Information obtained from the National Private Hire Association (Appendix 4) shows that, based on a two-mile daytime journey Chiltern fares are joint 281st out of 363 authorities across the country, with the highest being £11.40, the lowest being £4.30 and the average being £6.00. Authorities that show at the bottom of the list as £0.00 do not have a fare set by the Council.

4.4 The table below shows the average price per litre of unleaded fuel & diesel in the UK since 2011 and that since the last fare increase, petrol prices have dropped by 15.94p since fares were last reviewed from 141.79p to 125.85p according to the most up to date figures. Diesel has dropped 16.48p from 147.96p to 131.48p (information from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy):

Petrol & diesel prices over the last 10 years, pence per litre



RAC Foundation (Source: BEIS)

4.5 Information from the Office for National Statistics indicates:

The consumer prices index (CPI) is the main United Kingdom domestic measure of consumer price inflation for macroeconomic purposes. The headlines for the December 2019 consumer prices index (CPI) are:

- The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) 12-month inflation rate was 1.4% in December 2019, down from 1.5% in November 2019.
- The largest contribution to the CPIH 12-month inflation rate in December 2019 came from housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (+0.36 percentage points).
- The largest downward contributions to the change in the CPIH 12-month inflation rate between November and December 2019 came from accommodation services and clothing.
- The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) 12-month rate was 1.3% in December 2019, down from 1.5% in November 2019.

4.6 Licence fees were reviewed in 2014, and fees relating to Hackney Carriages were changed shown below:

Type of licence	previous Fee (£)	Current Fee (£)
One year Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Grant	300	399
One year Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Grant using LPG and CNG Fuels	135	199.50 (50% of full fee)
Renewal Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	300	300
Renewal Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence using LPG and CNG Fuels	135	150 (50% of full fee)
Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence Grant 1 year	95	161
Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence Grant 3 year	N/A	332
Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence Renewal 1 year	95	95
Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence Renewal 3 year	N/A	256
Transfer of Licence	80	90
Change of Vehicle	67	67
Disclosure and Barring Scheme	51	£52.50

5. Options

Members have the following options:

- Recommend to the Head of Healthy Communities a change to the table of fares in line with option 1 or 2 in Appendix 2 for consultation.
- Recommend to the Head of Healthy Communities to maintain current table of fares.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 The cost of carrying out the fare review and associated consultation including advertising costs will involve staff time and resources, but these costs will be met within the existing budget.

- a. There is no right of appeal against fares once set but the decision of the Council regarding changes to its table of fares could be the subject of a Judicial review. If an application for Judicial Review were lodged this would result in legal fees to defend the review and further costs which we would seek to recover if the review was unsuccessful. In the event of a successful review the Council may also have to pay the applicants costs.

7. Unitary Implications

Any fares agreed by the Council will carry forward to Buckinghamshire Council.

8. Next Steps

As described within the options and recommendations sections

Background Papers:	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
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