

TITLE	Hackney Carriage Tariff Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Licensing and Appeals Committee 16 June 2015
WARD	None Specific
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director Environment

SUMMARY

1. OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY To determine the Hackney Carriage tariff for the next twelve months.

2. PROPOSALS FROM THE TRADE

Members are requested to consider

Changes suggested as follows:

2.1. **Tariff 1** (between the hours of 06:00 – 22.00)

Start at £3.00 up to 704 yards or 150 seconds then
20p for every 147 yards or 30 seconds

Tariff 2 (between the hours of 22.00 – 06.00 and bank holidays)
50% extra on tariff 1

Tariff 3 (Special days – Christmas Eve and Day, Boxing Day New Year's Eve and New Year's Day) 100% extra on tariff 1

2.2. All week from 18.00 – 23.00 hours' time and a quarter (change of hours)

2.3. Tariff 2 to start at 22.00 every day

2.4. No change

3. OFFICERS SUMMARY OF REPORT

3.1. Traditionally officers have not given a recommendation on whether proposals from the trade on tariffs should be accepted or rejected. The key consideration is the balance between supporting small business and ensuring the general public has access to a good value hackney carriage service across all areas of the Borough.

3.2. The key information for Members of the Committee is based around the comparison of cost increase to be trading as a Hackney Carriage driver or operator in 2015 versus the level of rise being requested from the trade. Paragraphs 1.5 and 1.9 of the main report identify these figures and members should satisfy themselves that the right balance has been struck.

MAIN REPORT

1. Background

1.1. Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to fix the rates for fares and other related charges in connection with the hire of Hackney Carriages. The Licensing & Appeals Committee agreed in March 2005 to review the taxi tariffs on an annual basis.

1.2. The last tariff change was in March 2013.

1.3. The views of the drivers regarding the next annual review were sought with a letter being sent to all 100 hackney carriage drivers and the larger operators in December 2014. The letter asked if the drivers wished for the tariff to change or for there to be no change with a view to re-consult next year.

1.4. Responses were received by 73 drivers, the general consensus of opinion was to change the yardage from 836 yards to 704 yards or from 190 seconds to 150 seconds and to change the hour of hiring to 22.00 currently 23.00, 1 response was no change. The full responses from the consulted drivers and their suggestions are shown in Appendix I.

1.5. We have consulted with one of our Taxi Operatives with the suggestions from the trade and he has broken down the proposed changes as requested by the trade:

- **The change to the flag rate would implement a 15.8% increase**
- **The change to the increment would implement a 12% increase**
- **The change of the time would implement a 21% increase**
- **Xmas and New year's he suggested the change to the fare by changing the times earlier say to noon and go to double at 10 instead of 11 pm**
- **The flag time which is done automatically by the meter, so on the rate they have asked for it would be 143 seconds.**

1.6. To help provide some context of the requested changes the following list gives examples of other local authorities actions to date:

- Wycombe Council tariff is linked to inflation rates so have not had a rise this year.
- Windsor and Maidenhead have requested a 2% rise
- Reading where issued with a 20p change on the flag fall for both day and night tariffs.
- West Berkshire is currently undergoing consultation of their tariff.

- 1.7. The trade publication, Private Hire and Taxi Monthly, publishes a league table of fares charged for a daytime two-mile journey in most areas of the Country. The current charge applicable to Wokingham and neighbouring authorities are shown in Appendix II.
- 1.8. The current Wokingham Borough Council Hackney Carriage of fares are shown as Appendix III
- 1.9. A check on CPI for the 12 months from December 2014 to January 2015 shows that transport prices fell by 2.0 % compared with a small fall of 0.6% between the same two months a year earlier. Most of the downward contribution came from motor fuel prices falling at a quicker rate than a year ago. The average price fell by 8.5p per litre between December 2014 and January 2015, to 108.3p. The average diesel price fell by 7.3p over the same period to 115.6p. Petrol is now the lowest price since November 2009 and diesel since February 2010. These figures were collated from the Office for National Statistics in March 2015.

2. Consultation

The following procedures are laid down by legislation and must be followed when making changes to a table of tariff and fares:

- 2.1. A note of the proposed changes must be published in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district. The notice must specify a period of at least 14 days from the date of publication when objections can be made to the Council. (This costs in the region of £950).
- 2.2. A copy of the published notice must be made available at the Borough Council Offices for public inspection, free of charge at all reasonable times.
- 2.3. If there are no objections, or those made are withdrawn, the variation in table of fares comes into effect of the expiration of the time allowed for public consultation in the notice.
- 2.4. If there are any objections, and they are not withdrawn, the Council must set a date within two months of the expiry date for public consultation, and then consider the objections made before agreeing a table of tariffs and fares.

3. Analysis of Issues

Wokingham Borough Council set the Hackney Carriage Tariff. Realistic rates must be set by the Council that balances the economic needs of licensees, whilst ensuring that persons using hackney carriages are not overcharged. There is also the need to ensure that hackney carriage proprietors are not priced out of the market to private hire firms, although the set tariff is the maximum that can be charged. It is open to negotiation between the passenger and driver if a lower fare is to be charged.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Not Applicable		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Not Applicable		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not Applicable		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services and priorities?)

Not applicable

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

None

List of Background Papers

Existing taxi tariffs
 Private Hire and Taxi Monthly – table of comparative tariffs
 Consultation responses
 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
 Town & Police Clauses Act 1847

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