

# Review of the Hackney Carriage (Taxi) Maximum Table of Fares - November 2023

## Community Services Committee Thursday, 9 November 2023

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

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Purpose: For decision

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Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

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### Executive summary:

- To determine the request for a proposed increase of the Hackney Carriage vehicle maximum table of fares.
  - The rate of Hackney Carriage fares is the authorised fare charged to passengers using Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed by the Council within the Council's area.
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### This report supports the Council's priority of:

Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge

**Contact officer** Jeannette Pickles, Licensing Officer  
jpickles@tandridge.gov.uk

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### Recommendation to Committee:

- A) To approve in principle a proposed variation to Hackney Carriage table of maximum fares as put forward by the taxi trade representative group with an implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.
- B) If Members are minded to vary the table of fares as proposed, the variation would be advertised in the local press allowing 14 days for comments to be submitted to the Council.
- C) Subject to no objections being received during the consultation period, the increase will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

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## Reason for recommendation:

- To allow the new proposed table of maximum fares to be publicly advertised. If any objections are received to the public consultation, these objections must be considered by Members and any new fare tariff must come into effect within 2 months of the original implementation date.
- To vary the table of maximum fares, it is necessary to give public notice in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- To permit the change in fares to be implemented provided there are no objections submitted to the Council.

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## Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has responsibility under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, for setting the maximum fares charged by Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed to operate within the District.
- 1.2 Hackney carriage drivers can choose to charge less than the maximum fares if they wish to, but they may not charge more.
- 1.3 Hackney Carriage ("Taxi") fares are made up of an initial hiring charge and a "mileage" rate, both of which are subject in terms of distance and / or time per unit cost. This is because when a hired taxi is stationary or moving slowly in traffic the meter continues charging, by time instead of distance.
- 1.4 The table of fares applies only to Hackney Carriage vehicles. Private Hire Operators agree their hiring charges in advance with their customers at the time of booking the journey by way of a 'private contract'.

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## Current maximum table of fares

- 2.1 The current table of fares approved by Members was last revised in 2022:

<b>Rate 1</b>	a) Between 07:01am and 08:29pm Mondays to Saturdays	
	<b>For the first mile or 8 minutes and 20 seconds of waiting time or uncompleted part thereof.</b>	<b>£4.50</b>
	<b>For each 9<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 34 seconds waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £2.70 per mile)</b>	<b>30p</b>
<b>Rate 2</b>	b) Between 08:30pm and 07:00am Monday to Friday	
	Or	
	c) Between 08:30pm Saturday and 07:00am the following Monday	
	Or	
	d) On Bank Holidays, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day	
	Or	
e) Where in excess of four persons are carried in vehicles licensed to carry such numbers at the times specified in a) above		

	<b>For the first mile or 10 minutes and 50 seconds waiting time or uncompleted part thereof</b>	<b>£5.00</b>
	<b>For each 11<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 64 seconds waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £3.30 per mile)</b>	<b>30p</b>
<b>Rate 3</b>	f) Between 10:00pm Christmas Eve and 11:59pm Boxing Day or	
	g) Between 10:00pm New Year's Eve and 11:59pm on New Year's Day or	
	h) Where in excess of four persons are carried in vehicles licensed to carry such numbers at the times specified in b) and g) above	
	<b>For the first mile or 10 minutes and 13 seconds waiting time or uncompleted part thereof.</b>	<b>£8.60</b>
	<b>For each 13<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 24 seconds waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £5.20 per mile)</b>	<b>40p</b>
<b>Other Charges</b>	For each piece of luggage conveyed outside of the passenger compartment of the vehicle	20p
	For each passenger in excess of two, irrespective of age	30p
	Soiling Charge – when the soiling of a vehicles interior causes it to be withdrawn from service for cleaning	£140.00

## Background

- 3.1 The table of maximum fare for Hackney Carriage vehicles was last revised on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
- 3.2 The taxi trade representative group is compiled of 10 Hackney carriage and private hire drivers, the Senior Licensing Officer and Licensing Officer to discuss any matters related to Hackney carriages and private hires.
- 3.3 The taxi trade representative group has submitted the proposal for variation following increase in the cost of living and still a relatively high cost of fuel.
- 3.4 In May 2023, Licensing Officers received a written proposal from the taxi trade representative group to increase the maximum table of fares. The proposed new maximum table of fares are as follows:

<b>Rate 1</b>	a) Between 07:01am and 08:29pm Mondays to Saturdays		
	<b>For the first mile or 10 minutes of waiting time or uncompleted part thereof.</b>	<b>£5.00</b>	
	<b>For each 10<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 1 minute waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £3.00 per mile)</b>	<b>30p</b>	
<b>Rate 2</b>	b) Between 08:30pm and 07:00am Monday to Friday Or		
	c) Between 08:30pm Saturday and 07:00am the following Monday Or		
	d) On Bank Holidays, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day Or		

	e) Where in excess of four persons are carried in vehicles licensed to carry such numbers at the times specified in a) above	
	<b>For the first mile or 10 minutes waiting time or uncompleted part thereof</b>	<b>£5.50</b>
	<b>For each 10<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 1 minute of waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £3.50 per mile)</b>	<b>35p</b>
<b>Rate 3</b>	f) Between 10:00pm Christmas Eve and 11:59pm Boxing Day or	
	g) Between 10:00pm New Year's Eve and 11:59pm on New Year's Day or	
	h) Where in excess of four persons are carried in vehicles licensed to carry such numbers at the times specified in b), c) or d) above	
	<b>For the first mile or 10 minutes waiting time or uncompleted part thereof.</b>	<b>£9.50</b>
	<b>For each 10<sup>th</sup> of a mile or 1 minute waiting time (or part thereof) thereafter (the equivalent of £5.50 per mile)</b>	<b>55p</b>
<b>Other Charges</b>	For each piece of luggage conveyed outside of the passenger compartment of the vehicle	20p
	For each passenger in excess of two, irrespective of age	30p
	Soiling Charge – when the soiling of a vehicles interior causes it to be withdrawn from service for cleaning	£150.00

3.5 The proposal went to consultation with the 116 licensed Hackney Carriage drivers between the 29<sup>th</sup> August and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The taxi licensing department received a total of 71 responses. 50 in favour of the increase and 21 opposed to the increase.

3.6 For information, published in the October 2023 edition of the Private Hire & Taxi monthly is a list of maximum fares for all local authorities in England and Wales, attached at **Appendix 'A'**. The information in this Appendix is correct at time of drafting this report, however there may have been further changes since.

3.7 Overall, the Council is currently ranked 138 out of 344. Here is a comparison of the Hackney Carriage fares in some of the neighbouring areas of the District, see table below:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2-mile fare £</b>	<b>Last increase</b>	<b>Rank out of 355 in UK</b>
Tandridge (current)	£7.20	2022	138
Reigate and Banstead	£7.20	2022	135
Mole Valley	£8.08	2022	46
Mid Sussex	£8.40	2022	23
Woking	£8.70	2022	13

Sevenoaks	£8.70	2022	12
Guildford	£10.00	2022	4
Epsom & Ewell	£10.60	2023	3
TfL	£10.60	2023	2

3.8 The proposed increase in a 2 mile journey of £0.80 is a 12% increase. However, the RPI has also increased since the last maximum table of fares revision in November 2022. The RPI as at September 2022 was 347.6, whereas in August 2023 it was 376.6 – an increase of 9%.

3.9 The AA Fuel Price report shows the average cost of fuel in the South East from 2019-2023, as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Unleaded (pence per litre)</b>	<b>Diesel (pence per litre)</b>
2019	129.3	132.4
2020	115.5	119.6
2021	136.1	137.9
2022	166.0	182.3
2023	156.8	160.5

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## **Consultation**

- 4.1 116 licensed Hackney Carriage drivers have been consulted. 50 agreed with the proposal, 21 disagreed with the proposal and 45 did not respond to the consultation. Of those who responded, 70.4% of them wish to see the maximum fares increased as per the proposal, 29.6% did not wish to see the maximum fares increased as per the proposal.
- 4.2 The consultation with the Hackney Carriage trade allowed them over 2 weeks to assess the proposed increase and feedback their comments to the Council.
- 4.3 Public consultation will occur immediately after the Committee decision if the proposal is agreed. The consultation shall not be less than fourteen days from the date of the first publication of the notice.
- 4.4 If no objections are received, the variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice.

- 4.5 If any objections are received to the public consultation, these objections must be considered by the Committee and any new fare tariff must come into effect within two months of the original implementation date.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

- 5.1 The cost of carrying out the statutory consultation on the proposed variations of the taxi tariff increase would be met by the existing budget held by the Licensing department which is cost recovered by taxi licence application fees.
- 5.2 The cost of re-calibrating individual taxi meters will be met by individual Hackney carriage proprietors and then will be checked by Licensing Officers as part of compliance checks. This is a normal part of work undertaken by Officers.

### **Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

- 6.1 As explained earlier, section 65 (1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the District Council to fix the table of fares for the hiring of Hackney Carriage vehicles throughout the District. Should Members agree to vary the table of fares for the hiring of a hackney carriage vehicle then Section 65 (2) requires that the Council shall publish its intention to vary in at least one local newspaper informing of a consultation period of at least 14 days. The notice of variation will also be made available on the Council's website and will be available for inspection at the offices of the Council. If no objections are received, the variation may be brought into force at the end of that period. However, if any objections are received, these would need to be considered by the Committee.

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## **Equality**

- 7.1 In line with the Public-Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.2 The contents of this report do not directly impact on equality, in that it is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse groups.

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## **Climate change**

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix 'A'** - List of maximum fares for all local authorities in England and Wales published in Private hire & taxi monthly

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## **Background papers**

Private hire & taxi monthly:

<https://www.phtm.co.uk/taxi-fares-league-tables>

AA fuel price reports:

<https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/driving-costs/fuel-prices>

Office of national statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/chaw/mm23>

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