

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2011

HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING: PROPOSED FARE CHARGE INCREASE

Report of the: Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For Decision

Executive Summary:

This report considers the appropriate Hackney Carriage permitted maximum fare increase to adopt from 01 May 2011 following consultation with the Hackney Carriage proprietors.

After receiving a request for an increase from Sevenoaks Town Drivers Association, all the Hackney Carriage proprietors licensed by this Licensing Authority were balloted on the option, in addition to an option of no change to the current fares.

The key difference is a rise from the current rate of £3.50 to £3.80. All other charges are to remain the same.

This report supports the Key Aim of safe communities and effective management of Council Resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Mrs Bracken

Head of Service Head of Environmental and Operational Services – Mr Richard Wilson

Recommendation: that:

- (a) the Committee determine this application for an increase in the maximum Hackney Carriage fare tariffs;
 - (b) should the Committee approve the application, the Head of Environmental and Operational Services be authorised to publicise the proposed fare increase and that if no unresolved objections are received, the proposed fares take effect on 1 May 2011;
 - (c) the Committee consider a further fare chart increase and whether further consultation should be undertaken with the taxi licensing trade; and
 - (d) the Committee limit the frequency of review for fare chart increase proposals to an annual basis.
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Background

1. The Council exercises a discretionary power to set the maximum fares for Hackney Carriages within the District. The Council has no power to control the fares charged by private hire vehicle operators.
2. The current fare tariffs which have been in operation since 27 October 2008 are displayed in the first two columns:

<u>Tariff</u>	<u>Current fare</u>	<u>Proposal</u>
<u>(A) Distance - First 1,287.2 metres (8/10 mile)</u>	<u>£3.50</u>	<u>£3.80 for first (8/10 mile)</u>
<u>Each additional 160.9 metres (1/10 mile)</u>	<u>21p</u>	
<u>(B) Waiting time (standard rate) For each period of 1 minute</u>	<u>35p</u>	
<u>(C) Waiting time (with indicated extra charges applied as below)</u> For each period of 1 minute (ii) (iii) (iv)	<u>50p</u> <u>50p</u> <u>65p</u>	
(D) Extra charges (i) Additional Passengers (For each person in excess of four persons)	<u>25% of prescribed fare</u>	
(ii) For hiring begun between 23:00 and 07:00 hours (except all bank & public holidays)	<u>£1.80 per fare</u>	£1.80 per fare
For hiring begun between 23:00 and 07:00 hours Monday to Friday and from 18:00 hours Saturday until 07:00 hours on Monday (except all bank & public holidays)		

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(iii) For hiring on bank & public holidays (other than Christmas & New Year holidays)	<u>£2.00 per fare</u>	
(iv) For hiring on Christmas & New Year holidays (commencing 18:00 hours Christmas Eve to 18:00 hours 27th December and 18:00 hours New Year's Eve until 06:00 hours 2nd January)	<u>100% of prescribed fare</u>	
(v) For carriage of pets (other than dogs for registered disabled people)	<u>£3.00 per fare</u>	
Spoilage Charge – (any claim for damage causing spoilage to the interior of the vehicle MUST be a matter between the proprietor of the vehicle and the passenger)		
Passengers will pay for congestion charges, tolls and car parking while under hire		

Results of the consultation

3. A total of 553 letters were sent to all Hackney Carriage/Private Hire drivers, vehicle proprietors and Private Hire Operators. Whilst every attempt was made to remove duplicate letters it is accepted that some licensees received duplicate letters due to the fact that their details held are entered in different ways.
4. 109 responses were received but these also included some Private Hire licensees. There are currently 211 Hackney Carriage vehicles and 272 Hackney Carriage drivers licensed with the authority. Many of the licensees will hold a Hackney Carriage driver and vehicle licence.
5. 109 responses were received. The result of the ballot was as follows:

Yes – for a fare increase	84 (77%)
No – for a fare increase	22 (20%)
Did not pass comment	3 (3%)

Additional Fare Chart Increase Proposal

6. On 9 March 2011 a further Fare Chart increase proposal was received from a Hackney Carriage Licensee. This is a different proposal to the one listed above. If Members are minded to agree to this request, detailed below, the

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Licensing Team would need to reconsult all Hackney Carriage drivers and vehicle proprietors.

7. The proposal is an average of 15% across the board which would give a first flag of £4.00 and 24p per 1/10 mile thereafter. This would mean a two mile figure of £6.88.
8. It is proposed that the Committee, subject to the Chairman's approval, limit the frequency for review of proposed fare chart increases to an annual basis.

Key Implications

Financial

9. The change in fare tariff agreed by the Committee will be formally advertised on Sevenoaks District Council's website and in a local newspaper.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

10. Council is following the appropriate process for determining applications for increases in the maximum fares chargeable by Hackney Carriage proprietors. Any changes to the fare tariffs must be publicised for 14 days. Any unresolved objections to the proposal will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Equality

11. Hackney Carriage vehicles are an important part of the public transport service. The Council, having decided to exercise its discretion to set the maximum fares that can be charged, must balance the need of ensuring access to the service and its profitability.

RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

12. No risk management issues have been identified.

Sources of Information: Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976.

Taxi Licensing Policy

Contact Officer(s): Claire Perry Ext. 7325

**COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES DIRECTOR
KRISTEN PATERSON**