

Rother District Council

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| Report to: | Licensing and General Purposes Committee |
| Date: | 16 January 2023 |
| Title: | Hackney Carriage Fares |
| Report of: | Head of Service - Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety |
| Ward(s): | All |
| Purpose of Report: | To consider increasing hackney carriage fares |
| Officer | |
| Recommendation(s): | It be RESOLVED : That the Hackney Carriage Fares Table Two at Appendix A be approved from April 2023 |

Background

1. The Council sets maximum hackney carriage fares in the district by adopting a fare card. Fares were last increased in May 2022 (by ten percent) and before that in December 2016. A ten percent increase in fares was advertised in December 2022 and representations were received. These maximum fares apply to hackney carriages only (which can operate from taxi ranks) not to private hire vehicles. The fares do not apply to journeys starting or ending outside the district.

Reasons for the proposed increase of ten percent

2. The increase in May 2022 was ten percent, the first increase since December 2016. The AA reports that fuel prices increased by 24% (twenty-four percent) between October 2016 and October 2021. The consumer price index (CPI) in October was 11.1 percent and in November 2022 was 10.7 percent.
3. To benefit the public and make the fare card easier to understand, the proposed fare table has been simplified by:
 - i. removing the higher tariffs from 22:30 to 01:00; from 01:00 to 05:30 and from 05:30 to 07:30
 - ii. thereby, only having only two tariffs on a normal day from 06:00 to 22:59 and from 23:00 to 05:59
4. To encourage hackney carriages to be available, the highest tariff would apply on Christmas Eve after 18:00 and on New Year's Eve after 18:00, as well as Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
5. Two other proposals are the charge for each additional person carried is increased from 20p to 30p and no increase in waiting time. The soiling charge is increased but this is a discretionary charge, determined by the driver.

6. It is important that hackney carriage fares are increased periodically to attract new hackney carriage owners and drivers to work in Rother. Drivers and vehicle owners need to be able to earn a sufficient income.
7. Although hackney carriages face competition from the private hire trade, they offer a different service, waiting on taxi ranks, being hailed and therefore the public should expect to pay extra for this service. The fare card shows the maximum fare that can be charged, a driver may charge less.
8. These maximum fares do not apply to journeys that start or end outside the district, for example trips to airports, the Conquest hospital and DGH. In these cases, a higher fare can be charged, if this is agreed with the passenger in advance, in the same way that private hire vehicles operate.
9. There is a cost to hackney carriage owners in recalibrating their meters and a cost to the Council in administering this change; the exercise should not therefore take place too frequently. When an increase is made it needs to be at least 5% (five percent), to justify the costs involved.
10. When fare cards are adjusted, the yardages and waiting time (in seconds) are varied, to keep the price at a whole 10p, 20p, 30p or 40p. The meter calculates the cost of a fare to the nearest ten pence. It is a legal requirement to use yards rather than metres. Waiting time is only charged after a journey commences, when the vehicle is travelling less than five miles per hour.

Representations (Appendix B)

10. Representations were received from licensed drivers only, representing seven percent of drivers consulted. Four objected to the fare increase. Four supported the fare increase. Three supported the fare increase but not the simplified tariffs.

Options

11. To take no action (no increase in fares), to approve Table Two or amend Table Two at Appendix A, having regard to the representations received.

All meters to be recalibrated within 7 days

12. Our handbook requires all meters to be set to the Council's fares and requires meters to be updated within one week of a change being implemented. It is proposed that these requirements continue. Meters must be calibrated to run the Council's tariffs, but they can also run on other tariffs, provided they are always lower.

Conclusion

13. Hackney carriage fares were increased in May 2022, but before that they were last increased in December 2016. Since 2016, fuel costs have increased considerably and the CPI in October 2022 was 11.1 percent.

Crime and Disorder

14. Fares should be sufficient for it to be attractive for drivers to work at night and at anti-social times.

Risk Management

15. Failure to periodically increase hackney carriage fares may result in insufficient numbers of hackney carriages operating in the district in the future, creating inconvenience for the public and potentially affecting public safety and the late night economy. There are no rights to appeal this decision other than by Judicial Review.

| Other Implications | Applies? | Other Implications | Applies? |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Human Rights | No | Equalities and Diversity | No |
| Crime and Disorder | Yes | External Consultation | Yes |
| Environmental | No | Access to Information | No |
| Risk Management | Yes | Exempt from publication | No |

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| Deputy Chief Executive: | Lorna Ford |
| Report Contact Officer: | Richard Parker-Harding, Head of Service |
| e-mail address: | richard.parker-harding@rother.gov.uk |
| Appendices: | A – Current and Proposed Fare Cards (Table One and Two) B – Representations received |
| Relevant Previous Minutes: | LG21/21 |
| Background Papers: | NONE |
| Reference Documents: | NONE |

Current Fare Card - Table One

With effect from 16 May 2022 as follows:-

| | 07:30 TO 22:30 | 22:30 TO 01:00 AND 05:30 TO 07:30 ON ANY DAY AND BANK HOLIDAYS 07:30 TO 22:30 | 01:00 TO 05:30 ON ANY DAY & ALL DAY CHRISTMAS DAY BOXING DAY NEW YEAR'S DAY |
|--|-----------------------|--|--|
| Any distance up to 152 yards | £3.00 | £4.40 | £5.80 |
| Each additional 152 yards up to one mile | 20p | 30p | 40p |
| Each additional 185.3 yards | 20p | 30p | 40p |
| Waiting time | 20p for 30 seconds | 30p for 44 seconds | 40p for 59 seconds |

For each person conveyed in excess of one 20p

For each dog conveyed (no charge for assistance dogs) 20p

Soiling charge from £55

Proposed Fare Card - Table Two

with effect from 24 April 2023 as follows:-

| | <u>06:00 TO 22:59</u> | <u>23:00 TO 05:59</u> <u>AND</u> <u>BANK HOLIDAYS</u> | <u>CHRISTMAS EVE AFTER 18:00 CHRISTMAS DAY BOXING DAY NEW YEAR EVE AFTER 18:00 NEW YEAR'S DAY</u> |
|--|------------------------------|---|--|
| Any distance up to 138.1 yards | £3.30 | £4.80 | £6.40 |
| Each additional 138.1 yards up to one mile | 20p | 30p | 40p |
| Each additional 167.6 yards | 20p | 30p | 40p |
| Waiting time | 20p for 30 seconds | 30p for 44 seconds | 40p for 59 seconds |

For each person conveyed in excess of one 30p

For each dog conveyed (no charge for assistance dogs) 20p

Soiling charge from £100

| Name | Support / Objection | Comments |
|------|----------------------------|--|
| L.E. | Objection to fare increase | I believe by increasing taxi fares at these difficult times will not be beneficial to our trade, therefore I REJECT this proposal. |
| A.W. | Objection to fare increase | I would like to object to the fare increase. Its the wrong time, yes I can totally understand that the cost of living is going up and the increase would be great for taxi drivers, but for the smaller metered company's such as Sidley taxis it would cause our customers to go the private hire on fixed fare. It would be more wise to keep the fares the same till the country has sorted itself out before we add to it |
| R.H. | Objection to fare increase | Due to the current financial climate I really don't think this is the time to be increasing fares. people with fixed low incomes are already struggling to pay for our services and would not be able to afford an increased fare and thus loose us trade from valued and vulnerable customers that rely on our services |
| S.S. | Objection to fare increase | <p>1. I write further to your communication regarding a 10% increase to the Taxi tariff. Please register my objection to this increase which comes on the back of a recent hefty rise and at a time when people (our customers) are struggling with cost of living increases.</p> <p>It is always stated that the tariff is the maximum amount to be charged and yet the council insists that meters are changed to the tariff rather than allowing continuance of fares at a lower amount. This means that should we not wish to pass on this increase to our customers we are faced with cumbersome calculations and a system which is not transparent to the customer. Furthermore this once again will leave us operating at a disadvantage to the numerous Hastings cabs who operate at a lower rate.</p> <p>I strongly urge that the council re thinks and shelves this increase or at least opens this up to a much wider discussion.</p> <p>2. This proposal would be very unwelcome . Fares have only just been increased people are struggling with the cost of living and can only spend money once. To put fares up again now is utter madness unless your motive is to destroy the taxi business in Bexhill .</p> |

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|--------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--|-------|------------|-------|-------|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--|-------|------------|-------|-------|--|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------|
| T.B. | Support increase but not simplified tariffs | Having seen the proposal of the new tariffs myself and believe many others will have objections, I am all for the increase in the rate but against all the other changes, I cannot understand why you cannot give us the change of increase and leave everything else alone, You give in 1 hand take away in the other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.D.C. | Support increase but not simplified tariffs | Having seen the proposed new tariff, I, and I imagine many others will have objections, I'm all for the rate increase, I'm against all the other changes, I cannot understand why you cannot give us an increase, and leave everything else alone. It's in 1 hand, and taken away with in the other. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D.S. | Objects to simplified tariffs | <p>EXAMPLES FOR A 1 MILE - 1760 YDS - JOURNEY PER RATE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>06.30am Fare eg. Little Common to Ravenside</u></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;"><u>Rate 1</u></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current Rate effective 16th May 2022</td> <td><u>Up to 152 yds</u></td> <td><u>Additional 152 yds to 1 mile</u></td> <td><u>Total</u></td> <td><u>Total Fare</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">£4.40</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10.6 x 20p</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£2.12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£6.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed Rate</td> <td><u>Up to 138.1 yds</u></td> <td><u>Additional 138.1 yds to 1 mile</u></td> <td><u>Total</u></td> <td><u>Total Fare</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">£3.30</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11.7 x 20p</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£2.35</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£5.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Loss of Earnings per Mile</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">-£0.87</td> </tr> </table> | <u>Rate 1</u> | | | | | Current Rate effective 16th May 2022 | <u>Up to 152 yds</u> | <u>Additional 152 yds to 1 mile</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Total Fare</u> | | £4.40 | 10.6 x 20p | £2.12 | £6.52 | Proposed Rate | <u>Up to 138.1 yds</u> | <u>Additional 138.1 yds to 1 mile</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Total Fare</u> | | £3.30 | 11.7 x 20p | £2.35 | £5.65 | | | Loss of Earnings per Mile | | -£0.87 |
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| | £3.30 | 11.7 x 20p | £2.35 | £5.65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Loss of Earnings per Mile | | -£0.87 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | <u>Rate 2 03:00am Fare</u> <u>eg Gatwick Pickup</u> | | | | |
|------|---------|--|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Current Rate effective 16th May 2022 | <u>Up to 152 yds</u> | <u>Additional 152 yds to 1 mile</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Total Fare</u> |
| | | | £5.80 | 10.6 x 20p | £4.24 | £10.04 |
| | | | <u>Up to 138.1 yds</u> | <u>Additional 138.1 yds to 1 mile</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Total Fare</u> |
| | | Proposed Rate | £4.80 | 11.7 x 20p | £3.51 | £8.31 |
| | | | | | Loss of Earnings per Mile | -£1.73 |
| | | <p>Taxi drivers are losing the double pay for the unsociable hours of 01.00 to 05.30am which I feel is completely unacceptable for drivers who have no choice but to work those hours due to the current cost of living crisis.</p> <p>On the BBC 6 o'clock news tonight it was stated that according to government figures there has been a 16% decrease in taxi drivers in Kent and Sussex since 2020. As the taxi service is often considered the 4th vital service to the community these new proposed fare changes not only disadvantage existing taxi drivers but will deter future drivers applying for their taxi licences as on a daily basis they will be losing money.</p> | | | | |
| A.I. | Support | Thank you for letting us know the new price but I'm not happy with that price do you know how much cost to run the car first of all thank you very much | | | | |
| M.S. | Support | Yes I agree. | | | | |
| K.D. | Support | Im happy about that | | | | |
| N.M. | Support | I fully support the proposed fare increases across the board. | | | | |