

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

3 November 2022

TITLE:	Proposed Changes to the Table of Metered Fares for Hackney Carriages
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Fiona Sloman - Executive Councillor for Housing and Licensing
CONTACT OFFICER:	Alicia Patterson - Head of Environmental Health
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards);

Appendix Attached

Appendix 1 – Current Table of Metered Fares

Appendix 2 – Proposed Table of Metered Fares

Appendix 3 – Comparative Table of Fares from Neighbouring Local Authority (Derbyshire Dales)

Appendix 4 – Consultation document sent out to local trade

1. Reason for the Report

To consider a request from the trade for an increase in the metered fares for Hackney Carriages operating in the High Peak.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee approves (or amends) the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages. A copy of the proposed fares can be found at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 2.2 That the Committee authorises the Head of Environmental Health to advertise the proposed fee increases in line with the procedure set out in Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. An advertisement will be placed in the Local Paper and a copy will be displayed at the Council Offices.
- 2.3 That the Committee **recommends** the approved or amended Table of fares to the Executive Councillor for approval after the 14 day consultation period.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976 provides that a Borough Council may fix the rates or fares within the Borough in connection with the hire of a Hackney Carriage, providing the proposed increase is published in at least one local newspaper, setting out the proposed variation and allowing a period of no less than 14 days from the first date of publication for objections. The Borough Council must also deposit a copy of this notice at the offices of the Council and make it available for public inspection at all reasonable hours when open without payment.
- 3.2 The Licensing Department received a request in June 2022 from several Buxton Operators for an increase the metered fares of the Council's licensed Hackney Carriages.
- 3.3 The basis for the request was the rise in the costs associated with the running of a Hackney Carriage. Over the past 12 months there has been a significant increase in the cost of fuel, insurance and purchase price of vehicles. The proposal for the increased metered fares can be found at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 3.4 The current table of fares approved by the Council was set in June 2017 and has not been varied since. A copy can be found at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 3.5 High Peak Borough Council is neighboured by a number of Local Authorities that have a variety of tariffs and rates that differ from one another. A table of comparable rates from neighbouring Authority Derbyshire Dales can be found at Appendix 3 to the report.
- 3.6 The proposed changes to the Table of Fares, if approved, would apply to all Hackney Carriages licensed by High Peak Borough Council. Operators may charge less than the agreed metered tariff, but cannot charge above the specified maximum. The delegation to set the fares is given to the Executive Councillor within the Council's Constitution, however, the Committee's views have been requested as to the level of any proposed increase.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Aim 3 - Working to support existing local businesses, both large and small across the High Peak as they respond to future challenges

5. Options and Analysis

- 5.1 The options available are;

- 5.1.1 To Approve the proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage metered fares;
- 5.1.2 To amend and approve the proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage metered fares;
- 5.1.3 To reject the proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage metered fares and continue with the current fare structure.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Taxis provide safe and secure transport for people when travelling, particularly for vulnerable people or people travelling alone or during the night hours.

6.2 Workforce

There are no implications for the Council's workforce. It will require the re-setting of all Hackney Carriage meters by the local trade.

6.4 Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications for the local authority

6.5 Legal

The increased fares, if approved, must be advertised locally in accordance with the relevant legislation prior to implementation. The delegation to set the fares is given to the Executive Councillor within the Council's Constitution, however, the Committee's views have been requested as to the level of any proposed increase.

6.6 Sustainability

The increase in fares is seen by the trade as essential to maintaining their local business model and retaining the current level of fleet vehicles and drivers.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

External consultation with the licensed Taxi Drivers and Operators has been carried out to determine the level of support for the proposed increase within the local Hackney Carriage trade.

6.8 Risk Assessment

There are no risks identified to the local authority. There is a risk that local residents may reduce their use of Taxis if the increases

are perceived to be too high or unaffordable.

Mark Trillo
Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)

Web Links and Background Papers

Contact details

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7. Background and Detail

- 7.1 The Licensing Department received a request in June 2022 from several Buxton Operators for an increase the metered fares of the Council's licensed Hackney Carriages. The Council last increased the Hackney Carriage Tariff in June 2017.
- 7.2 The basis for the request was the rise in the costs associated with the running of a Hackney Carriage. Over the past 12 months there has been a significant increase in the cost of fuel, insurance and purchase price of vehicles. The proposal for the increased metered fares can be found at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 7.3 In order to assess the appetite for a tariff increase, a consultation with the Hackney Carriage Trade across the borough was conducted in August 2022. The consultation ran for 3 weeks with a further 1 week extension. A copy of the Consultation document is attached as Appendix 4 to the report.
- 7.4 A total of 172 consultation letters were sent out to all Hackney Carriage Drivers and Operators, by email and by post where the driver did not provide a current email address. At the end of the consultation period, 34 responses had been received representing a 20% return. It should be borne in mind, however, that responses from licensed operators were made on behalf of a number of drivers working under the Operator Licence, so the number of individuals expressing a view would be higher than that recorded by responses received.
- 7.5 Of the responses received, 94% (32 responses) were in support of the tariff increase. Where comments were made, most cited the significant recent rises in fuel costs in recent months as the driver for change.
- 7.6 The 2 responses received that were opposed to the tariff increase commented that the proposed increase would be inappropriate at this time given the current cost of living crisis, that it may discourage people from using taxis, and that fuel costs may re-balance in the near future and it was too soon to consider an increase. One respondent stated that most of their customers were elderly, relied heavily on taxi use to get to essential

appointments, were already struggling with living costs and may be unable to afford increased fares. The other respondent did, however, suggest that whilst the £3.50 rise would not be particularly problematic, the £5 increase on Tariff 2 may be too high.

- 7.7 For comparative purposes, the current Hackney Carriage Tariff schedule from neighbouring Derbyshire Dales District Council is included as Appendix 3 to the report. Derbyshire Dales increased their Hackney Carriage tariff from June 2022, although their previous tariff had been in place since 2011 so had not been particularly reflective of changes over the last decade.
- 7.8 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976 provides that a Borough Council may fix the rates or fares within the Borough in connection with the hire of a Hackney Carriage, providing the proposed increase is published in at least one local newspaper, setting out the proposed variation and allowing a period of no less than 14 days from the first date of publication for objections. The Borough Council must also deposit a copy of this notice at the offices of the Council and make it available for public inspection at all reasonable hours when open without payment. The delegation to set the fares is given to the Executive Councillor within the Council's Constitution, however, the Committee's views have been requested as to the level of any proposed increase