

Outcome of the Statutory Hackney Carriage Tariffs Consultation - 2023

Background

The current hackney carriage fare scales were agreed in July 2022. It has been agreed that, as of 2024 the review of fares will be aligned to the financial year to assist the trade with their financial planning. Due to the timing of the request this has not been possible in the financial year beginning April 2023, and it was instead agreed that the review should be completed by the end of July 2023 at the latest.

Initial discussions with the trade took place at the January 2023 Taxi Trade Liaison Group meeting. These were followed by further discussions at the [Licensing Committee on 23 January 2023](#) and the meeting of the [Executive Committee on 23 March 2023](#). It was agreed that under the [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976 Section 65 Hackney Carriage Fares](#), a statutory two week consultation on proposed modifications to the table of fares should be undertaken.

What We Proposed

	Current	Proposed
<p>Tariff 1</p> <p>Any journey with 1-4 passengers</p> <p>Applies for any hiring when journey commences between 06:00 and 21:59 Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays, Public Holidays, 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st December and 1st January)</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £5.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 20p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £30.00</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £5.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 40p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £33.00</p>
<p>Tariff 1b</p> <p>Any journey with 5 or more passengers</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £7.50</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £7.50</p>

	Current	Proposed
<p>Applies for any hiring when journey commences between 06:00 and 21:59 Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays, Public Holidays, 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st December and 1st January)</p>	<p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 30p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £45.00</p>	<p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 60p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £49.50</p>
<p>Tariff 2</p> <p>Any journey with 1-4 passengers</p> <p>Applies for any hiring when journey commences between 22:00 and 05:59 Monday to Saturday, 06.00 and 21.59 Sundays, bank holidays, and public holidays, between 06:00 and 23.59 on 24th, 26th and 31st December.</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £7.50</p> <p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 30p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £45.00</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £7.50</p> <p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 60p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £49.50</p>
<p>Tariff 2b</p> <p>Any journey with 5 or more passengers</p> <p>Applies for any hiring when journey commences between 22:00 and 05:59 Monday to Saturday, 06.00 and 21.59 Sundays, bank holidays, and public holidays, between 06:00 and 23.59 on 24th, 26th and 31st December.</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £11.25</p> <p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 45p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £67.50</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £11.25</p> <p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 90p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £74.25</p>

	Current	Proposed
<p>Tariff 3</p> <p>Any journey with 1-4 passengers</p> <p>Applies for any hiring when the journey commences between: 00.00 and 23.59 on 25th December; 00.00 and 05:59 on 26th December; 00.00 and 05:59 on 1st January</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £10.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 40p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £60.00</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £10.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 80p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £66.00</p>
<p>Tariff 3b</p> <p>Any journey with 5 or more passengers</p> <p>Applies for any hiring when the journey commences between: 00.00 and 23.59 on 25th December; 00.00 and 05:59 on 26th December; 00.00 and 05:59 on 1st January</p>	<p>For the first 1489.235 yards or 264 seconds (whichever is reached first) £15.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 135.385 yards or every 24 seconds (whichever is reached first) 60p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £90.00</p>	<p>For the first 1340.307 yards £15.00</p> <p>For each subsequent 243.692 yards 120p</p> <p>Waiting time per hour £99.00</p>
<p>Extra Charges</p>	<p>If a hackney carriage is booked by telephone, text, email or other electronic means a booking fee may be charged by prior arrangement only</p> <p>Congestion Charge, Ultra Low Emission Zone, or any tolls will be applied for any journey where such charges or tolls are incurred. These</p>	<p>If a hackney carriage is booked by telephone, text, email or other electronic means a booking fee may be charged by prior arrangement only</p> <p>Congestion Zone Charges, Tolls or similar will be applied for any journey where such charges or tolls are incurred.</p>

	Current	Proposed
	<p>charges would not appear on the meter.</p> <p>A charge for "fouling" was introduced, meaning that passengers who soiled the interior or exterior of a taxi could be charged.</p> <p>Interior - maximum £75 Exterior - maximum £25</p>	<p>Fouling charge to be retained and charged at: Interior - maximum £100 Exterior - maximum £25</p>

The net effect of the proposed changes would mean the cost of a two mile journey, during tariff 1 operating hours, would increase from £8.00 to £8.70 in a saloon vehicle.

Why We Wanted Your Views

The Council is committed to balancing the legitimate aims of the taxi trade to maintain profitability in the face of increasing costs, while protecting the public from excessive fares. The issue of setting fares for hackney carriage drivers is an important one for two reasons: the fare set by licensing authority largely determines the ability of drivers to earn a decent living, but also aims to ensure that passengers receive a fair deal when taking a journey in a licensed hackney carriage. We' therefore welcomed your views in order to ensure that we are balancing these two objectives.

The procedure for setting fares and public notice requirements are stipulated within [section 65 of the Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#).

The procedure is prescriptive and requires that a decision to make/vary a table of fares is made first. Following this, there is a statutory consultation requirement, to allow for any objections to the new/varied table to be made. The remainder of the process is dependent on whether any objections are received (and not withdrawn) or not.

Who and How we Consulted

- A notice was placed in the Newbury Weekly News and the Reading Chronicle on the 11 May 2023 and on the Public Protection Partnership's website on the same day.
- It was also posted on the Council's Consultation Hub on the 11 May 2023
- A copy of the notice was also placed in the Market Place Reception by the 11 May 2023.
- An email was sent to all licensed Hackney Carriage Proprietors to alert them to the consultation.
- A notification was also sent out to the 1195 people on the Community Panel
- The consultation ran from the 11 May to 25 May 2023.

What you Told Us

The Council received **seven objections** to the proposals and **14 more general comments** from a total of 19 respondents. Four of the objections related to the proposed increase in the fares, one felt that the increase was not high enough and two objections were received stating that the fouling charges were too low. We received 11 comments supporting the modifications. Of the 19 responses received ten were from residents, two from drivers (did not state if PH or HC), two hackney carriage drivers, two private hire drivers and three operators.

Objection
Resident Fares need to decrease - fuel costs are going down not up. The proposed increases are only increasing the cost of living crisis and increasing private car journeys in West Berkshire
Resident Taxis are too expensive
Resident Looking at the proposed charges they're doubling in price but surely the cost of petrol/diesel hasn't doubled. I understand the need for the costs to keep up with inflation but think that doubling the price is a bit too much
Resident Appalling, this will raise fare from Cold Ash to Newbury higher than going by to Cardiff and back by private car

Objection

WBC PH Driver

Why only 8.5% when the inflation rate is at 10% .??? And why not give full EV vehicles a Hackney Carriage plate maybe first 50 cars to start with see how it works i.e. anyone who buys a new EV car should be able to get a new Hackney Carriage Licence plate issued if they want one instead of having to buy a wheelchair access vehicle to be Hackney Carriage.

WBC Operator

The fouling charge I still don't think this is high enough, One of my cars on the fleet had someone be sick in it at 22.00 on Saturday. The car is then out of use until it can be valeted meaning the driver lost the rest of the night where he could earn between £200-£300 plus he is hit with a cleaning bill of £130.00.

WBC Driver

I agree with most of the changes, but I feel like the fouling charges still need to be reviewed. As explained in previous emails if someone was to foul in the taxi after 5pm you won't find anywhere to get your car valeted, which means you would be at a loss of money. And it would be a loss as even though the vehicle wouldn't be in use, you still have to pay insurance sign on fee for your operator, taxi plate, taxi badge etc.

The longer the waste remains in the car the bigger the risk of smells adhering to the material of the seats. Once you get round to clean the car, most valeting places won't want to clean it up, and as most of them advertise there will be extra charges if the car is really dirty.

Your left with no other option on the day than to try and rent a car for the night, so the cost of someone fouling, increase as not only do you have to clean the car and pay a premium to get rid of any odours but add rent for the night (if your able to find one)

We also received the following **comments** in relation to the consultation which are set out below:

General Comments

Cost

Resident

I think the changes seem fare. It simplifies some of the tariffs and allows a fair cost of living increase for longer journeys or larger groups.

General Comments
<p>Resident It seems fair to me. We use taxi's a lot and the local drivers are great. We don't begrudge them an increase. Especially with the current cost of living being so high.</p>
<p>WBC PH Driver I agree with the proposed fares.</p>
<p>Resident The increases appear to be fair and reasonable given the increase in fuel charges and the inevitable increase in insurance costs</p>
<p>WBC HC Driver I agree with the increase and although appreciate that fuel has come down pretty much nothing else has. Everyday living costs have gone up a huge amount compared to this time last year mortgage payments grocery items and gas and electricity costs have gone up a huge amount compared to this time last year.</p>
<p>WBC Operator I strongly support a tariff increase. The cost of fuel has slightly reduced However the cost of living mortgages rents gas electric etc are still at an all time high. Repair bill and services cost on the vehicle are also at an all time high and cars are off the road longer waiting on parts hence more down time for drivers. Wages for staff again at an all time high and not in line with current tariff costs.</p>
<p>WBC Driver I'm happy to see that there has been a slight increase on the fairs, as unfortunately for everyone everything else has/is and will go up. Yesterday as an example I had to change all 4 tyres in my taxi and budget ones now cost £308 compares to £280 I used to pay. If you were to put mid range you would be looking at £120 a tyre. Insurance for vehicles in general is on the rise, car parts are on the rise, with the added problem of waiting time for some parts to be supplied due to the lack of materials atm, etc</p>
<p>WBC Operator Happy with the 8.5% increase</p>
<p>WBC HC Driver I believe we do need a fare increase due to daily cost of living rising. Fuel has recently been reduced but servicing and maintenance cost have risen along with tyres.</p>
<p>WBC Operator I am in favour of 8 and half % because everything keeps going up And rate of inflation is 10 % I have invested a lot of money in buying an electric car and feel there could be more incentives. Maybe electric cars should be Hackney and the Hackney licence be</p>

General Comments
non-transferable This is just an idea. I love my electric car and most days I can work from 8am til 4pm on same charge. It is the way forward for everyone
Resident
I think the proposed changes are fair reflection of the current state of the economy
Public and Other Transport
Resident
The new Lib Dem council should open up the market and allow companies such as Uber, Bolt (taxify) and Free now to operate in West Berkshire. It's a scandal we can't have access to these services to ensure the competitiveness of taxi services.
Vehicle Standards
Resident
all though I think the current charges are very expensive early Sunday morning RBH to near Thatcham £67 (mid-February 23) I can sympathise with the driver trying to make a living, BUT the taxi was the equivalent of a rattly old van.
General Support
Taxi Trade
No objections from me!

What We Are Proposing To Do

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 section 65 gives a Local Authority the power to determine the table of fares for the hire of hackney carriages. This legislation also prescribes the statutory consultation process that must be followed and the procedures for ensuring that objections are properly considered in relation to a Local Authority's adoption of or variation to a table of fares before the table comes into effect.

As objections to the tariffs have been received and not withdrawn, the Executive is required to decide whether or not the revised table of fares should be modified before it is implemented and decide the date for implementation. A report was taken to the [08 June 2023 Executive meeting](#) for a decision.

The Executive, while noting the objections, agreed to the modifications as set out in the table. They also decided that the modified table of fares would come into effect on the 19th June 2023 in accordance with the requirements under s.65 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. We have written to the trade to update them.