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**Rob Tinlin**  
**Interim Chief Executive**

## **AGENDA**

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>LICENSING COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 7pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Council Offices, Council Chamber</b>
<b>Membership:</b>	<b>Councillors T. Gibson (Chairman), Acott, Anderson, Ainsley, Barton-Brown, Dixon, Egan, Greig, May, C. Mumford, S. Mumford, Palmer, Savage, Taylor, Walter</b>
<b>Officers attending:</b>	<b>Ann Horgan – Head of Governance Mrs Melanie Harris - Head of Licensing &amp; Safer Communities Jason Bishop – Corporate Legal Adviser</b>
<b>Committee Enquiries:</b>	<b>Loretta Hill, Ext. No. 2427</b>

### **PART I** **(Business to be taken in public)**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Members Interests**
- 3. Taxi Fare Increase – New Tariff of Fares**

The report of the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities is attached.

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**Subject: Taxi Fare Increase – New Tariff of Fares**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Regulatory Committee is requested to agree a formal request made by a number of Castle Point licensed drivers for a permanent increase in the level of charges for journeys made by taxi. The Council regulates the maximum fares for the hire of hackney carriages and a strict legal procedure must be followed before a new tariff can be introduced.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council may fix the rate of fares within a district for time as well as distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle or arrangement of the vehicle, to be paid in accordance with the fare card.

It is important to recognise that the Table of Fares represents the maximum level of fares that can be charged by a licensed Hackney Carriage. From time to time the fare tariff may be amended in accordance with the legislation and this is done by means of authorising a 'Table of Fares'. A copy of the present Castle Point Table of Fares is attached at Appendix A.

Any proposed increase must be advertised in at least one local newspaper giving a minimum of 14 days for objections to be received. If no objections are received the revised table of fares will come into effect on a date after the expiration of the period specified in the notice. If there are objections, the Council must set a further date within two months of the original date on which the new fares will come into force following consideration in accordance with the proposed delegations.

Whilst it is important that local authorities consider the interests of consumers, this must be balanced with the need to ensure that taxi drivers, owners and operators are sufficiently remunerated, thus encouraging taxis to be on the road at times when there is demand for them.

For example, if the night rates were set too low, there would be insufficient taxis prepared to work when some members of the community most need them. In addition, if fares are too low, drivers may feel the need to work longer hours to maintain their income, which could also prejudice public safety.

Also an increase in fares helps to maintain the income of the taxi trade at a comparable rate with average earnings. This will maintain a professional aspect to taxi driving and seeks to encourage job security and the maintenance of a standard of service.

The trade has experienced a number of impacts arising out of the COVID pandemic which have affected their income, including the requirement to work from home for the vast majority of residents and the closure of the night time economy for significant periods during the year. The longer term behaviour changes as a result of more people continuing to work from home continue to have an effect.

In recent weeks, there has also been an increase in diesel and petrol fuel costs and the rate of inflation has reached its highest level in a decade.

A previous request for a fare increase which was made in 2017 was withdrawn as the trade could not agree a new tariff. In 2017 the Council did not oppose a fare increase.

A temporary surcharge was authorised under designated authority by the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities on 26 May 2022. This authorised a 30p additional surcharge per hiring to reflect both the increase cost of living and the Platinum Jubilee additional holiday. This temporary increase will stay in place until further notice.

### 3. Proposed Fare Increase

- 3.1 On 8 February 2022 a request for a fare increase was submitted by a badge holder who is both a Castle Point Combined Hackney and Private Hire Driver and this request was made on behalf of 55 other drivers. The proposed option was also the the outcome from a full consultation with all drivers who are licensed by CPBC as the Taxi Licensing Authority.

The following has been provided as a demonstration on how the proposed increase would affect a variety of fares:

<b>Journey (car)</b>	<b>Current fare</b>	<b>Proposed fare</b>	<b>Percentage increase</b>
1 mile	£4.20	£4.60	9.5%
2 mile	£6.20	£6.60	6.5%
3 mile	£8.20	£8.60	4.9%
4 mile	£10.20	£11.00	7.8%
5 mile	£12.20	£13.60	11.5%
<b>Journey (multi seater)</b>	<b>Current fare</b>	<b>Proposed fare</b>	<b>Percentage increase</b>
1 mile	£6.30	£6.90	9.5%
2 mile	£9.30	£9.90	6.5%
3 mile	£12.30	£12.90	4.9%
4 mile	£15.30	£16.50	7.8%
5 mile	£18.30	£20.40	11.5%

In addition the temporary 30p surcharge can continue to be added once for each hiring until further notice.

Castle Point is currently shown as 191 out of 366 local authorities in the National League of Hackney Carriage Fares, with 1 being the most expensive, (compiled by Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine, May 2022). Within Essex, Castle Point is currently shown as within the bottom 3 out of 13 local authorities. This is based on the present table of fares.

#### **4. Consultation**

The formal request for an increase presented two suggestions for new fare options, together with the preferred choice from 55 drivers. A survey was then circulated by the Licensing Team to all remaining Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers (193) and 5 operators, not included in the initial submission.

Option 1 received most support and is presented to this committee for consideration and is attached to this report as Appendix B.

The results from both surveys were collated and are shown at Appendix C

##### Summary of Survey Results

248 drivers were invited to take the survey, and 111 were returned (45%)

110 supported an increase

70 supported option 1 (64%)

40 supported option 2 (36%)

1 driver did not support either option

There were no surveys returned by operators.

#### **5. Conclusion and timeline**

- 5.1 Under the Council's Constitution, fare increases are determined by the Regulatory Committee. Any changes in fares agreed by the Licensing Committee must be advertised and displayed publicly for a minimum period of 14 days before the change takes effect. The timescales set out in the table below have taken account of publication deadlines following the Committee decision and the response in the event of objections being received.

If there are no objections within the period prescribed for making objections, the new fares would come into effect. If objections are raised the intention is to seek the approval of this Committee to delegate the consideration of objections to the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee. Any objections received (and not withdrawn) would then be reviewed with a view to determining whether any amendments to the table of fares need to be made. If the fares proposed remain unchanged, the original date of 25 July 2022 would still stand.

The table below sets out the proposed timetable for implementation:

6 July 2022	Licensing Committee
11 July 2022	Public Notice for fare review - beginning of consultation period.
25 July 2022	End of consultation period
Week commencing 25 July 2022	Fare change comes into effect (providing no objections are received or objections received are then withdrawn) The implementation date reflects the time required to organise any changes to the fare tariff, the printing of fare cards and the programming of the checking and sealing of meters in hackney carriages.
23 Sept 2022	Where objections are received and not withdrawn, the matters are considered by the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities in consultation with the Chairman of Licensing Committee. The date cannot be more than 2 months from the date specified in the notice and after the consideration of objections. The implementation date will be revised at that point – In the event of objections being received, any new fare tariff would need to be in place before 25 September 2022

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 This report is compliant with the procedures laid down in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which allows Licensing Authorities to set fares for hackney carriages.
- 6.2 The Council can only state the maximum fare that may be charged by hackney carriages and therefore if some taxi proprietors choose not to raise their fares then that would be their choice

## **7. Human Resources, Equality Implications**

- 7.1 All duties will be performed by existing staff. There is a need to ensure that people with disabilities are charged the same as people without disabilities. Therefore wheelchairs and guide dogs will be continued to be carried free of charge.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 All actions will be carried out within existing budgets.

## **9. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**

- 9.1 **Vision**

Great Place, Great People, Great Community  
We want Castle Point to be a place where.....

- Economy and Growth – Our economy is thriving, businesses are growing and we are prospering through having the skills to access good quality jobs.

**Recommendations:**

That the proposed new fares as shown in this report be applied to the current tariff, subject to:

- 1 The statutory consultation procedure being completed.
- 2 The new Table of Fares coming into force on a date to be fixed by the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities.
- 3 The detailed breakdown being agreed with the meter agents.

That the Licensing Committee considers the content of the report to identify whether an increase in the fare tariff is appropriate at this time.

If an increase is agreed to be appropriate, to consider the acceptability of the proposed increase in the table of fares, and that these changes should be advertised accordingly in accordance with the timeline set out within the body of this report.

If no representations are received within the period allowed the increase to the table of fares shall become effective on a date to be confirmed on or after 25 July 2022.

That the Head of Licensing and Safer Communities be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman of Licensing Committee, to consider any representations received (which are not then withdrawn) during the consultation period and determine the appropriate response required, including the approval of amendments to the table of fares, if considered necessary, and the fixing of another date for a revised table of fares to come into effect as necessary.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Current table of fares

Appendix B - Option 1

Appendix C – Consultation

**Background Document:**

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

**Report Author:**

Mrs Melanie Harris MA BSc (Hons) MIOL  
Head of Licensing and Safer Communities

## Castle Point Borough Council

### Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 – Section 65 Hackney Carriages – Table of Fares

The Council has approved increases in fares and variation of extra charges with respect to Hackney Carriages as set out below.

Distance and Time	Normal Tariff 4 Seats	Multi-Seater Tariff 5-8 Seats
<b>Tariff 1 - for hiring's which begin between 6am and 9pm</b>		
For the first 715 yards or the first 3 minutes (or combination of parts of such distance or time)	£2.80	£4.20
For each additional 179.9 yards or 45 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) until a fare of £10.00 normal tariff or £15.00 multi-seater tariff is shown	20p	30p
For each additional 176.4 yards or 33 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) after a fare of £10.00 normal tariff or £15.00 multi-seater tariff is shown	20p	30p
<b>Tariff 2 - for hiring's which begin between 9pm to midnight and 4am to 6am daily and Sundays and Bank Holidays between 6am and 9pm</b>		
An additional charge to Tariff 1	£1.00	£1.50
<b>Tariff 3 - for hiring's which begin between midnight and 4am daily</b>		
An additional charge to Tariff 1 and 2	£1.00	£1.50
<b>Tariff 4</b> <b>Christmas and New Year charges hiring's which begin after 9pm on 24 December and up to 6am on 27 December and on New Year's Eve for hiring's which begin after 9pm on 31 December and up to 6am on 1 January</b>	Double the day rate	Double the day rate
<b>EXTRAS</b>		
<b>Luggage</b> For any luggage and/or animals carried No charge for the carriage of wheelchairs and guide dogs	30p per item	30p per item
<b>Additional passengers</b> For each person in excess of one	30p	Nil
The multi-seater tariff may only be used when 5 or more people are in the vehicle or when a multi-seater vehicle has been requested by the hirer/customer		
<b>SOILING CHARGE</b> *A fixed charge will be levied for restoration costs should you soil or damage this vehicle in any way	£60.00	£60.00

\*Castle Point Borough Council is not liable for this soiling charge should the customer refuse to pay.  
Therefore the proprietor reserves the right to take civil court action where necessary

## TAXI FARE INCREASE

### OPTION 1

#### STANDARD RATES

##### Tariff 1

**£3.00** for the first ¼ mile (440 yards) or the first 2 minutes (or a combination of parts of such distance or time)

**20p** for each additional 186 yards or 48 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) until a fare of £8.40 is shown on the taxi meter.

**20p** for each additional 142 yards or 36 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) when a fare of £8.40 is shown on the taxi meter.

##### Tariff 2

#### NIGHT CHARGE / UNSOCIAL HOURS

For hirings begun between 9pm and midnight and 4am and 6am, also on Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays between 4am and 6am and midnight, also between 6am and midnight on 1 January until 6am on 2 January, an additional:  
**£1.00**

##### Tariff 3

For hirings from midnight until 4am, and from midnight until 6am Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, except during Christmas and New Year periods an additional:  
**£2.00**

#### CHRISTMAS CHARGES

##### Tariff 4

For hirings from midnight 24 December to 6am (double the standard rate and unsociable hours rate):  
**£8.00**

##### Tariff 5

For hirings on Boxing Day from 6am to 6am on 27 December plus and additional 10p on the standard yard rate:  
**£5.00**



#### NEW YEAR CHARGES (AN ADDITIONAL)

For hirings on Midnight 31 December to 6am 1 January (double standard rates and unsocial hours rate)

**£8.00** as Tariff 4

#### EXTRA CHARGES

##### 1.Luggage

For any luggage carried. No charge for disabled persons wheelchairs, disability aids or any animal transported in the vehicle. (Luggage is intended as hand luggage, shopping bags, suitcases etc.) The driver reserves the right to negotiate an additional charge for larger items up to a maximum of £10):

**40p (max charge)**

##### 2.Additional Passengers

For each person in excess of one

Specific requests for the delivery of property left in taxis must be paid for at the metered fare

**40p**

##### Soiling Charge

A reasonable charge may be levied for restoration costs should the passenger soil or damage the vehicle. The proprietor reserves the right to take civil action where necessary:

**£70.00**

#### FOR VEHICLES CARRYING 5-8 PASSENGERS (EXCLUDING W/C PASSENGER)

Multi-seater rate will be time and a half of all tariffs.

## Proposed Taxi Fare Tariff Increase - Consultation

111

Responses

02:40

Average time to complete

Closed

Status

1. Name

111

Responses

2. Combined or Private Hire Drivers Licence Number

111

Responses

Latest Responses

"

"C0120"

"319"

3. Do you agree with a fare increase?



Yes

110

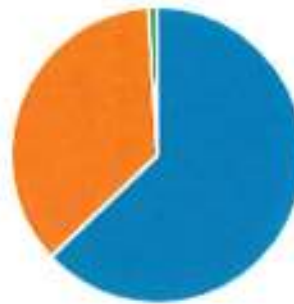


No

1



4. Which option do you support?



64% of people answered **Option 1** for this question, and the majority answered **"Yes"** for Question 3.

