

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING & APPEALS COMMITTEE

28 January 2008

Report of the Chief Solicitor

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 APPLICATION FOR INCREASE IN TABLE OF MAXIMUM HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 By law, the Council has to set a table of maximum hackney carriage fares. These are the maximum fares which may be charged for hackney work where taxis are hailed on a rank or in the street. No proprietor is required to charge the maximum fares and, indeed, many charge at a lower rate. However, no hackney carriage journey can be charged at a higher rate, save that they do not apply to private hire work (journeys which are pre-booked) or to journeys which extend outside the Borough and in both those cases the fare to be charged is by agreement between the proprietor and the hirer.

1.1.2 The function of the Council is to protect the consumer from overcharging by proprietors. However, fares have to set at a realistic level which reflects the costs of providing the service.

1.1.3 It is not relevant for the Council to take into account the position of the current fares in a league table, although comparison with fares in adjacent areas is acceptable. Any increase will also need to take into account any proposed increase in licensing fees.

1.1.4 Any proposal to vary the table of fares is subject to public consultation and the proposals have to be advertised in a local newspaper and objections may be made within 14 days of the date of advertisement. Any objections must be considered by the committee at a meeting held within two months of the end of the consultation period.

1.2 Application for increase in maximum fares

1.2.1 I have received an application for a review of the tariff of maximum hackney carriage fares signed by [number] taxi drivers, from both the Tonbridge and West Malling areas, as follows:

We the undersigned support the application for a fare increase at the earliest

possible opportunity. Fuel prices have not exceeded £1 per litre and the likelihood is that there will be further increases. This combined with the increased costs imposed by TMBC and other associated motoring costs are now causing hardship for many drivers.

The proposal is for the £2.80 start rate to remain but for a reduced distance equivalent to 0.8 of a mile.

The rate per mile to be increased to £2.20 per mile and for the Time and Distance charging to be permitted in line with all other boroughs. We have not had an increase since early 2005 (all other neighbouring boroughs have had at least one increase in this time) and would request again that fares are increased annually in line with our neighbouring boroughs.

- 1.2.2 This application has been supported by a letter from Mr Terry Hill, which is set out in full in **[Annex 1]** to this report.
- 1.2.3 The following shows a comparison between existing and proposed rates for typical journeys. The distances are not exactly the same as the fare is calculated in whole charging units:

	Existing fares	Proposed fares
For a journey of approximately 1 mile (1.61 km): Existing rate for 1.61 km Proposed rate for 1.57 km Proposed rate for 1.71 km	£2.80	£3.20 £3.40
For a journey of approximately 3 miles (4.82 km): Existing rate for 4.82 km Proposed rate for 4.92 km	£6.80	£7.80
For a journey of approximately 5 miles (8 km): Existing rate for 8.04 km Proposed rate for 8.12 km	£10.80	£12.20

- 1.2.4 Members last increased fares in May 2005. Members last considered a request to review fares in August 2007, but decided at that time that the case for an increase was not made out.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 Not applicable

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Not applicable

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Not applicable

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 It is **recommended** that members consider and determine this request for variation of the table of maximum fares for hackney carriages.

Background papers:

contact: Duncan Robinson

Petition signed by taxi drivers

Letter from Mr T Hill

Duncan Robinson

Chief Solicitor