

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## LICENSING & APPEALS COMMITTEE

7 June 2010

### Report of the Central Services Director

#### 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 Two applications for a review of the tariff of maximum fares have been received from Mr R Morgan, a taxi driver and Mr T Hill a taxi business proprietor. Mr Hill's application is supported by a petition signed by 27 drivers. Both letters and petition are attached in Annex 1 of this report.

1.2.2 The two applications are broadly similar and both Mr Morgan and Mr Hill have agreed that a joint approach to a single application would be preferable and would avoid duplication.

1.2.3 To summarise, the application seeks the following:

1. The initial "Flag down" rate be increased from £2.80 to £3.20 for .75 mile
2. For each subsequent 153.04 yards the rate be 20p. This equates to £2.30 per mile.
3. The Easter Sunday rate be reduced from double fare to fare and a half.
4. The waiting time tariff be increased from 10p for a 24 second period to 10p for 20 seconds. This equates to £18 per hour.
5. The application seeks approval for the implementation of a "time and distance" tariff. At present this Council's licensed taxis operate on a distance only tariff whereby the fare is calculated purely on the distance travelled irrespective of the time that the journey takes. The time and distance tariff comes into operation when the speed of the vehicle usually falls below 6mph or is stationary. At this point the waiting time tariff takes over from the distance element of the taxi meter until such time as the speed of the vehicle increases to above the 6mph limit.
6. The application from Mr Hill seeks to increase the weekend supplement from 50p to 80p. This is not supported by Mr Morgan.
7. The increase of the spoilage charge be increased from £75 to £100. This charge is only recoverable by the driver/operator by Civil means should a customer fail to pay for spoilage.
8. All existing extra charges for hirings between midnight and 0600, Bank or Public Holidays, Christmas and New Years Eve, Christmas Day, Easter Sunday and the carriage of more than four passengers to be at the same percentage rate increase.

1.2.4 The following shows a comparison between existing and proposed rates for typical journeys.

	Existing fare	Proposed fare
For a journey of .75 mile (1207 km)	£2.80	£3.20
For a journey of 2 miles (3218 km)	£5.60	£5.90
For a journey of 5 miles (8045 km)	£12.20	£12.80

1.2.5 A comparison of rates for typical journeys in adjacent authorities is shown below.

## Comparison Chart (April 2010)

	Time and distance tariff	1 mile	2 miles	5 miles
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	NO	£3.40	£5.60	£12.20
Tunbridge Wells	YES	£3.80	£6.20	£13.40
Maidstone	YES	£3.80	£5.80	£11.80
Sevenoaks	YES	£3.92	£6.02	£12.32
Gravesham	YES	£4.00	£6.00	£12.00
Medway	YES	£4.20	£5.80	£10.20

1.2.6 Whilst this report deals with the taxi fares charged to the public, Members are reminded that the fees charged by this Council to the taxi industry are currently frozen and remain at the level set in 2008 and are the subject of a separate report to Members

1.2.7 Members last authorised a taxi fare increase in January 2008. The current maximum fare structure is contained in Annex 2 of this report.

### 1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None.

### 1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 N/A.

### 1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 N/A.

### 1.6 Recommendations

1.6.1 It is recommended that Members consider and determine this request for variation of the table of maximum fares for hackney carriages.

Background papers:

contact: Melvyn Wood

Nil

Julie Beilby  
Central Services Director