

Outcome of the Hackney Carriage Tariffs Consultation

Background

Bracknell 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.

The trade have presented the Taxi Trade Liaison Group with a business case asking that the tariffs be reviewed. The current hackney carriage fare scale was agreed in 2011 and adjustments have been discussed at a number of meetings of the Taxi Trade Liaison Group as well as at Licensing Committee meetings over the past few years.

As a result of these ongoing discussions a report was taken to the [Licensing and Safety Committee 24 June 2021](#) where it was agreed that a public consultation on the proposed changes set out below would be consulted on. This decision was endorsed by the Executive Director of Delivery.

In accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 65 Hackney Carriage Bracknell Forest Council proposed to vary the table of fares chargeable in the District as follows:

	Tariff 1	Tariff 2	Tariff 3
When applied	For hiring between 07:00 and 23:00 Monday to Sunday	For hiring between 23:00 and 07:00 Monday to Sunday For hiring on Bank and Public Holidays For hiring on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 18:00 until 24:00	For hiring on Christmas Day through to 07:00 on Boxing Day
Flag Rate For the first 450 yards (411 metres) or 1 minute 42.8 seconds	£3.00	£4.50	£6.00
For each subsequent 175 yards (160 metres) or uncompleted part	20p	30p	40p
Waiting Time 40 seconds	20p	30p	40p

Extra Charges	
Fouling of vehicle interior £50 Fouling of vehicle exterior £10	
When this vehicle is carrying more than 4 passengers, a surcharge of 50% will be applied to the fare shown on the meter at the end of the journey.	

Who and How we Consulted

- A notice was placed in the Bracknell News (Wednesday 07 July 2021) and on the Public Protection Partnership's website (08 July 2021).
- A copy of the notice was emailed individually to all licensed Hackney Carriage Proprietors for their comments.
- The consultation ran from the 08 July 2021 to 22 July 2021.

What you Told Us

Summary of the comments received

Thank you for your email, I thought it was understood by us that you would drop the 50% surcharge as have the fare and the end of the journey it could lead to the driver over charging or in some cases a driver could be beaten up, as the passenger are thinking they are being over charged.

I am rather dismayed that the 50% surcharge has been carried over without modification. Although it has been quite some time since the last fare revision tidying this up was spoken about at that time. Essentially the trade wants this available to use at the start of the journey rather than at the end, and I've had many arguments with drivers over the years telling me that "all the other 'meters have this". I've always followed the fare chart, so all the 'meters that I support can only add this at the end of the journey, namely Cygnus/LTI/Voyager. In the past I've had to summon Sue Walker and Niamh Kelly over at tariff alteration time to "explain" this to drivers.

It is obvious why the trade would like this facility, as it would give unscrupulous drivers carte blanche to charge 50% extra whenever they thought they could get away with it!

I am aware that most of the other taximeter brands have been programmed to allow the driver to charge 50% extra at any time (which makes a nonsense of calendar "control" of course) because, as already alluded too, I am told this by the drivers who want me to allow this for them too.

I would be grateful if you would write to all of your proprietors/drivers, and all of the taximeter dealers concerned confirming that this extra 50% can only be added at the **end** of the journey. Although it is not my direct concern I personally fail to see why 50% should ever be added, as even when permitted it is a huge increase in profitability for the driver, bearing in mind that all the standing charges involved in running a taxi come out of the initial 100%. Most areas allow "extra" charges for additional passengers after the first one or two, typically 50p per passenger, and this

was mooted for Bracknell after the 2011 revision. This is a much fairer way of spreading the cost as opposed to a jump of 50% of the entire fare for one passenger more than four, and also very much reduces the ability to over-charge.

At the very least I would urge you to re-word the fare chart to the effect that the surcharge (of 50% or whatever) is NEVER shown on the 'meter. This would eliminate most of the over charging that undoubtedly occurs.

I would like to bring up the 50% surcharge added to the fare at the end of hire. Bracknell have had this from many years ago. This was when manufacturers could program anything into a taximeter which is one reason MID (measurement instruments directive) was brought in 2006 effective 2016 to stop meters being capable of fiddling the fare.

So we have older non MID approved meters (now illegal) in Bracknell that can do this and newer (legal) meters that cannot do this.

All councils in UK should have MID only Taximeters in their terms and conditions. Has Bracknell? and do you have a policy regarding when older non MID meters should be replaced.

The 50% surcharge could be left on the fare card but should say Not shown on Taximeter or get rid of it altogether.

What We Are Proposing To Do

The concerns raised have been discussed with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee and with the Executive Director of Delivery. The clarification being sought by the taxi meter people does not change the scheme and only seeks to clarify that the surcharge can only be added at the end of the journey and that it will never be shown on the meter.

The Executive Director of Delivery, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee and the Public Protection Partnership Manager, has therefore agreed, to amend the table of fares as set out below to clarify the process in respect of the surcharge and in so doing address the concerns raised.

The revised table of fares will come into operation from Sunday 01 August 2021. The results of the consultation will be circulated to all Members of the Trade who will need to contact the taxi meter agents to arrange to have their meters updated.

The issues raised about the types of meters being used will be considered as part of the review of the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver and Operator Policy

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