

Sent: Thu, 18 Feb 2021 10:50
Subject: FORMAL REQUEST to UDC - Fares of Hackney Carriage Vehicles

1. INTRODUCTION.

Local authorities have the power to fix fares for Hackney Carriage Vehicles (aka taxis) under s.65 of LGMPA (1976). Hackney fares are displayed on taximeters and were last increased on 01 October 2012. Since then, fares have remained at their current level. During a recent focus group discussion with selected taxi proprietors, the Licensing & Compliance Manager has been briefed on discussion among the taxi community about reviewing the fares and changing metered rates. There are currently over 50 proprietors "plying for hire", with taxis at the council's ranks in Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow. An informal consultation carried out by ULODA (Uttlesford's official trade association) has resulted in 22 taxi drivers voting in favour of an increase in metered rates and waiting time (and only 1 voting against the proposed flag rate) as at 04 February 2021. If Members approve the proposed new rates, they will be advertised locally and on UDC's website, and if no objections are received within 14 days, taximeters will be changed to display them with immediate effect.

2. PROPOSED INCREASE IN FARES (see APPENDIX for details)

The increase we suggest from £5.80 to £7.30 (journeys of 2 miles at RATE 1, 07.00 to 22.30 weekdays) is in recognition of the length of time since the last rate change and the impact of cost increases as reflected in public data such as the AA Vehicle Costs Index. The average inflation rate each year from 2012 to 2020 has been 2.18%, producing a composite price index of 18.86% (ONS tracking).

This is the typical journey which has been used by Private Hire & Taxi Monthly in its published league tables. PHTM is the official journal of the NPHTA to which ULODA is affiliated. UDC's current position in the national hackney fares table is number 231 (February 2021). Although it is not known when other local authorities intend to review their metered rates, for comparison purposes they have set their fares as follows for the same typical journey:

Chelmsford City	£7.10
North Herts	£6.60
South Cambs	£6.60
Harlow	£6.40
Braintree	£6.20
East Herts	£6.10
Epping Forest	£5.50

The proposed increase in Waiting Time from £20 to £30 per hour is intended to reflect proportionately any potential loss of income.

3. IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

Legal: The council is legally obliged to advertise any proposed variations in fares. Failure to do so would invalidate the new rates.

HR: Failure to take proper steps to consult appropriately with those affected by the proposals may result in a legal challenge.

Financial: None except the cost of local advertising. Any delay in implementing the variations will have a detrimental effect on taxi trade income.

Risk Management: There are legal, reputational and possible financial risks unless the council complies with correct procedures.

4. CONCLUSIONS

ULODA has secured a strong level of trade support so far for the proposals detailed in the Appendix, without consulting with every proprietor and driver affected.

It is reasonable to assume that there will be few if any objections if Members vote in favour of advertising the proposals as required by the law.

After a long period of no increase in fares, it will be prudent for all stakeholders to work in partnership in the present political and economic climate.

Thank you in anticipation of a favourable outcome during this financial year. ULODA would like to see the proposals implemented by 01 April 2021.