

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: MSDC Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/8
FROM: Cllr Tim Weller MSDC Cabinet Member for Environment	DATE OF MEETING: 8th August 2023
OFFICER: Mark Emms – Director of Operations	KEY DECISION REF NO. TBC

THE APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON A REVISED TABLE OF FARES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.2 This report sets out the work that has taken place to develop and propose a revised table of fares for Hackney Carriages.
- 1.3 This report provides evidence of support from the Hackney Carriage trade to revise the current table of fares also referred to as tariff table.
- 1.4 This report seeks support of the Council to consult on the revised table of fares for a period of 14 days.
- 1.5 If no objections are made, or any made are withdrawn, the proposed fares will take effect on the specified date.
- 1.6 If objections are made and not withdrawn, a report will be prepared for Cabinet to consider.
- 1.7 The Council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the table of fares shall come into force with or without modifications as decided by them after consideration of the objections.

2. OPTIONS

- 2.1 Consider whether to:
 - a) Modify the tariff table of maximum fares and proposed changes for consultation or;
 - b) Make no modification to the tariff table of maximum fares.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the revised table of fares for consultation, attached at **Appendix A** to this report, and in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

REASON FOR DECISION

To adopt the revised table of fares for Hackney Carriages within the Mid-Suffolk District.

To enable the trade within the District to continue to operate economically whilst still maintaining an efficient, safe and cost-effective service for those residents and visitors to Mid Suffolk who need to use the services of a Hackney Carriage.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Local Authorities have the power to fix the maximum rates of fares for Hackney Carriages within their District by virtue of Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 4.2 Fares for Hackney Carriages in Mid Suffolk have not been increased since July 2020 and the current tariff table is presented as **Appendix B**.
- 4.3 Due to the current national economic situation, drivers requested that the Council review the current fares as they have highlighted that they are struggling to provide a service to the public and maintain an adequate level of income.
- 4.4 A proposed tariff was consulted on in March 2023 following Cabinet approval, however the trade response was to reject the proposal due to the rising costs of providing a service.
- 4.5 Following on from this, the licensing officers held two meetings with nominated members of the trade to discuss their alternative proposal.
- 4.6 Once the proposed tariff was confirmed, the Licensing Team emailed all 129 Mid Suffolk licensed drivers on the 6th July 2023 to gain their feedback. No objections were received and there were 8 emails of support. These responses are attached at **Appendix C**.
- 4.7 The National Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine produces a national hackney fare comparison table of all 340 licensing authorities in England and Wales. The table compares the first two mile journey of all authorities. This table varies daily.
- 4.8 Information has been taken from this table to produce a comparison of the current fares set by neighbouring authorities and where they sit in the overall national position.

Comparison	2 miles costs	National table 340	Review date
East Suffolk (North)	£8.40	17	2022
Ipswich BC	£7.50	89	2023
South Norfolk	£7.50	89	2023
West Suffolk	£7.20	97	2022

Babergh	£7.00	148	2023
Tendring	£6.80	159	2022
Colchester	£6.90	171	2022
Norwich City Council	£6.60	195	2023
East Suffolk (South)	£6.20	241	2020

- 4.9 If the proposed tariff is implemented, Mid Suffolk two-mile cost would be £8 and would place the Authority in position 54 of 340 and in position 2 in the above comparison table.
- 4.10 Mid Suffolk current two mile journey is £6.40 and sits in position 253 of the national table.
- 4.11 It is an operational decision for each operator or proprietor whether the maximum fares are charged, but they are not permitted to charge more than the maximum fare. Therefore, they can adjust the fare below the maximum.
- 4.12 The Department for Transport ‘Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing, Best Practice Guidance for Licensing Authorities in England’ specifies the following:
- The Department recommends that in reviewing fare rates, authorities should pay regard to the needs of the travelling public, with reference both to what it is reasonable to expect people to pay but also to the need to give taxi drivers the ability to earn a sufficient income and so incentivise them to provide a service when it is needed. There is likely to be a case for higher fare tariffs at times of higher demand to encourage more drivers to make themselves available or when the journeys are required at anti-social times.
 - The Competition and Markets Authority recognised in its 2017 report the need for licensing authorities to be responsive to patterns of demand, that they “should monitor waiting times and consider adjusting the regulated fare cap to address mismatches between supply and demand. Addressing such mismatches is likely to benefit passengers.”
 - Taxi fare tariffs are a maximum, and in principle are open to downward negotiation between passenger and driver. It is not good practice to encourage such negotiations at ranks, or for on-street hailing; there would be risks of confusion and security problems. Licensing authorities should however make it clear that published fares rates are a maximum.
- 4.13 Should Cabinet agree to modify the tariff table, before any alteration to the fares can take effect, a public notice explaining the changes must be placed in a local newspaper allowing a period of 14 days for comments on the proposals. If no adverse comments or objections are received, the approved changes must take effect. If adverse comments or objections are received, then the matter must be returned to Cabinet to consider the representation(s).

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 Licensing functions most closely align with

- supporting businesses to thrive and grow, with a particular emphasis on smaller and start-up concerns.
- encouraging employable skills (local transport and public service standards).
- supporting safe and active communities; and
- co-ordinating our approach to regulation with Suffolk County Council to minimise the burdens on local business (particularly through the safety and suitability arrangements the District have together with the County, in respect to school transport and social service contracts).

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This is a statutory function, and the legislation provides for recovery of the reasonable costs of administration, inspection, monitoring and supervision of taxi licensing. This includes the hackney carriage fares review process.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Section 65 (1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the District Council to fix the table of fares for the hiring of Hackney Carriage vehicles throughout the district. Section 65 (2) requires that the Council shall publish its intention to vary the table of fares for the hiring of a hackney carriage vehicle in at least one local newspaper informing of a consultation period of at least 14 days. The notice of variation will also be made available on the Council's website and will be available for inspection at the offices of the Council. If no objections are received, the variation may be brought into force at the end of that period. However, if any objections are received, these must be considered by the committee as set out in paragraph 9.1.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade needs to be supported and enabled to sustain transportation services in the District

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Should members approve any change to the current table of fares, section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 1976 requires that before any alteration to the tariff table can take effect, a public notice explaining the changes must be placed in a local newspaper and a consultation conducted for a minimum of 14 days. If no objection is made or if all objections are withdrawn, the approved changes can take effect. If objections are received, then the matter must be returned to Committee for their consideration. Following consideration of the representations, the Committee, at that meeting, must set a date when the fares come into force, with or without modifications. **Appendix D** details the list of organisational consultees in addition to the public consultation.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report. This is a revision to an existing fare scheme. The Council recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, in the exercise of its licensing functions, and shall have due regard to any

comments received during the consultation, or individual applications, on equality issues.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
APPENDIX A – Proposed table of fares	Attached
APPENDIX B – Existing fare tariff table	Attached
APPENDIX C – Driver responses	Attached
APPENDIX D – List of organisational consultees	Attached

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

13.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

13.2 [National Hackney Fare Tables For 2 Mile Fare Tariff.](#)

13.3 [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing. Best Practice Guidance for Licensing Authorities in England. \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

14. REPORT AUTHORS

14.1 Licensing Team Leader – Kate Pearsall

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