

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Licensing & Regulatory Committee	REPORT NUMBER: MLR/22/2
FROM: Licensing Team	DATE OF MEETING: 3 February 2023
OFFICER: Neil Gardiner	KEY DECISION REF NO. N/A

CONSULTATION OF A REVISED TABLE OF FARES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 That the Licensing Regulatory Committee consider this report and determine whether to vary the maximum fares that may be charged by hackney carriage proprietors.

2. OPTIONS.

- 2.1 Consider a new tariff table of maximum fares.
- 2.2 Consider whether to:
- I. Modify the tariff table of maximum fares and proposed changes or.
 - II. Make no modification to the tariff table of maximum fares.
- 2.3 Members may choose to modify the current tariff table of maximum fares. The date upon which the modifications to the maximum fares take effect shall be one month after the end of the fourteen-day statutory consultation period if no adverse representations are received.

3. RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

- 3.1 That Cabinet following consideration of Licensing and Regulatory Committee's recommendation, adopts the revised table of fares, attached at **Appendix A** to this report, and in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

REASON FOR DECISION

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

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables the council to undertake this function and 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. The public then must be provided with a period of at least 14 days to make comment on the proposals. If no adverse comment/objection is received, the approved changes must take effect. Alternatively, if adverse comment/objection is received then the matter must be returned to allow the Committee to consider the representation(s). Providing elected members agree to modify the fare tariff table at today's meeting it is proposed a public notice will be published in a local newspaper explaining the changes and inviting observations.
- 4.2 The committee will be aware that the Hackney fare tariff tables were previously presented at committee for Mid-Suffolk in July 2020. The current tariff table is presented as **Appendix B**.
- 4.3 On 27th September 2022 officers from the Licensing Department polled the taxi trade for two weeks on the concept of a combined table of fares for both districts, (Babergh and Mid-Suffolk) and to facilitate this modification, If a change from yards to miles would be favourable as each tariff accounts at different yardage. The poll is attached as **Appendix C**.
- 4.4 On 12th October 2022 officers from the Licensing Department polled the Hackney vehicle trade on four potential fare options. This is attached as **Appendix D**.
- 4.5 The options presented were:
- I. No change to the current table of fares. (Option one).
 - II. An Increase on the initial mile and each 1/10th mile thereafter: (Option two)
 - III. Increase fee on the initial mile only. (Option three)
 - IV. A percentage increase or decrease than the one suggested. (Option four)
- 4.6 On this occasion 64 drivers viewed the poll with 32 responses. Representing 50% participation. Trade emails are attached as **Appendix E**
- I. What fare option do you think is correct for the trade.
 - **Option 1** - 6%
 - **Option 2** - 59%
 - **Option 3** - 6%
 - **Option 4** - 21%
 - **No reply given** 6%
- 4.7 When considering the options members are reminded that the tariff that is set should be regarded as the maximum fares that can be charged. Taxi proprietors are not tied to charging the maximum fare but are not permitted to charge more than the tariff price shown on the meter. Market forces are known to come into play, and for instance because of the level of competition in Mid-Suffolk the driver/ proprietor may decide to charge less than the maximum tariff.

- 4.8 On Thursday 17th November 2022 during the newly formed trade panel, it was highlighted to Licensing Officers a difficulty, as drivers stated it was manually impossible to choose a tariff on the Mid-Suffolk version of their meters so a per person fee was the only viable option. The proposed maximum tariff table [Appendix A] was redrafted and circulated for an informal 2-week period on Wednesday 30th November 2022. Drivers' emails with feedback are attached as **Appendix F**.
- 4.9 Officers have researched and produced a comparison table of current fares set by neighbouring authorities in Norfolk. The comparison table takes into account the position of highest to lowest fares set by all 325 licensing authorities in England and Wales based upon costs of the first two miles of the journey. The data is prepared by the national Private Hire and Taxi Monthly magazine and varies daily.

Comparison. Correct as of 12.10.22	2 miles costs	National table 350
Breckland District Council	£8.00	6
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	£7.00	108
Broadland District Council (proposed)	un-listed	
South Norfolk Council (proposed)	un-listed	
North Norfolk DC	£5.80	280
Norwich City Council	£6.60	178
Ipswich BC	£6.55	183
East Suffolk (South)	£6.20	225
Babergh Mid Suffolk	£6.26	219
West Suffolk	£7.20	82

- 4.10 If Option 2 was implemented, Mid Suffolk would move into position 98 from 325 authorities. Dated at time of writing, 5th December 2022. Positions vary daily.

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 These 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/Boroughs 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 and supervision of the licensing scheme.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As explained earlier, 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 5.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no associated risk with a fare review of the Hackney Carriage maximum fare.

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 adverse comment/objection is received, the approved changes can take effect. Alternatively, if adverse comment/objection is received then the matter must be returned to allow this Committee to consider the representation(s). Following consideration of the representations, the Committee, at that meeting, must set a date when the fares come into effect. **Appendix G** 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
(a) APPENDIX A – Proposed table of fares	Attached
(b) APPENDIX B – Existing fare tariff poll	Attached
(c) APPENDIX C – Combined tariff poll	Attached
(d) APPENDIX D - Hackney Fare tariff poll	Attached.
(e) APPENDIX E - Driver email responses. .	Attached.
(f) APPENDIX F – Mid-Suffolk Fare Table Consultation. Post Panel driver emails.	Attached
(g) APPENDIX G - 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.](#)

14. REPORT AUTHORS

14.1 Licensing Officer - Neil Gardiner