

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: MSDC Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/22/55
FROM: Cllr Jessica Fleming MSDC Cabinet Member for Environment	DATE OF MEETING: 6th March 2023
OFFICER: Mark Emms – Director of Operations	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB396

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 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 tariff.
- 1.4 This report seeks support of the Council to consult on the revised table of fares for a period of 14 days. If no adverse comments or objections are received during the consultation, the revised tariff table will take effect.

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, following consideration of Licensing and Regulatory Committee's recommendation, 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. This was consulted as 'Option Two' with the taxi trade.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Cabinet, following consideration of Licensing and Regulatory Committee's recommendation, request the Licensing Team to investigate the modernisation of Hackney Carriage Meters. All findings are to be reported back to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee at a later date.

REASON FOR DECISION

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

Ensuring that Hackney Carriage fares are reviewed in line with the costs of providing a service to allow drivers to cover the cost of running a taxi and providing a service to the public whilst ensuring that fares are reasonable for the public to pay.

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 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.
- 4.4 Should Cabinet agree to modify the fare 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).
- 4.5 On 27th September 2022 officers from the Licensing Service polled the taxi trade for two weeks on the concept of a combined table of fares for both districts, (Babergh and Mid-Suffolk) and if a change from yards to miles would be favourable as each tariff accounts at different yardage. This poll is attached as **Appendix C**.
- 4.6 On 12th October 2022 officers from the Licensing Service polled the Hackney Carriage trade on four potential fare options. The options presented were:
 - a) No change to the current table of fares. (Option one)
 - b) An increase on the initial mile and each 1/10th mile thereafter. (Option two)
 - c) Increase fee on the initial mile only. (Option three)
 - d) A percentage increase or decrease than the one suggested. (Option four)
- 4.7 On this occasion 64 drivers viewed the poll with 32 responses, representing 50% participation. This poll is attached as **Appendix D** and driver email responses at **Appendix E**.
 - I. What fare option do you think is correct for the trade.
 - **Option One**- 6%
 - **Option Two**- 59%
 - **Option Three** - 6%
 - **Option Four**- 21%
 - **No reply given** 6%

- 4.8 On Thursday 17th November 2022 during the newly formed trade panel, Mid Suffolk drivers highlighted to Licensing Officers that their meters were only compatible with yards, and that it was not possible to manually choose a tariff on the meter, so any extra charges had to be based on a 'per person' fee.
- 4.9 On Wednesday 30th November 2022, the proposed maximum tariff table (Appendix A) was redrafted and circulated to Mid Suffolk drivers only, for an informal two week period. Driver email responses are attached as **Appendix F**.
- 4.10 On Friday 3rd February 2023, the Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee considered the proposal to vary the tariff table of maximum fares and recommended that Cabinet adopt the revised table subject to amendment to include calculations in metric and miles.
- 4.11 The Licensing and Regulatory Committee also recommended to Cabinet that the Licensing Team investigate the modernisation of the meters and report back to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee at a later date.
- 4.12 Officers have researched and produced a comparison table (below) of current fares set by neighbouring authorities. The comparison table focuses on local areas in the Eastern Region and 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	2 miles costs	National table 350
Colchester	£7.70	46
Tendring	£6.80	159
North Norfolk DC	£5.80	305
Norwich City Council	£6.60	195
Ipswich BC	£6.55	201
East Suffolk (South)	£6.20	241
East Suffolk (North)	£6.60	184
Babergh	£6.26	234
West Suffolk	£7.20	97

- 4.13 If Option Two is implemented, Mid Suffolk would move into position 137 from 350 authorities. Positions vary daily.

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.

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 taxi 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 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
APPENDIX A – Proposed table of fares	Attached
APPENDIX B – Existing fare tariff poll	Attached
APPENDIX C – Combined tariff poll	Attached
APPENDIX D – Hackney Fare tariff poll	Attached
APPENDIX E – Driver email responses	Attached
APPENDIX F – Mid Suffolk driver email responses	Attached
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 Team Leader – Kate Pearsall

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