

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2018
Report No:	LIC/FH/18/002
Report to and date/s:	Licensing and Regulatory Committee – 9 April 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk
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Purpose of report:	The Licensing and Regulatory Committee are asked to consider the proposed hackney carriage fare alignments for West Suffolk.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that Members: 1) Determine and approve <i>either</i> Option 1 or Option 2, and 2) If the request is approved, the effective date of the implementation of the increase be on 4 June 2018 (subject to statutory procedure relating to public objections).
	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation:	Letter to all holders of a Hackney Carriage vehicle licence outlining options
Alternative option(s):	Options as per recommendations and contained within the report

Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not taking into consideration the objections received could lead to challenge	Medium	consultation with the public and the taxi trade	Low
Not making an initial attempt to align the fares will delay the Single council process	Medium		
Ward(s) affected:		All	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/57	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1 - Current fares cards Appendix 2 - Proposed fare cards Appendix 3 - Fare Comparisons Appendix 4 - Consultation form to all West Suffolk Drivers Appendix 5 - Consultation Raw Data	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables Forest Heath District Council (the Council), at its discretion, to fix and vary the tariff for Hackney Carriages that are licensed by the Council.
- 1.2 The Council power extends to fixing, or varying, the rates of fares within the District for time and distance, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a Hackney Carriage vehicle, or with the arrangements for the hire of a vehicle, by means of a table of fares.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (the Act)

1.3 lays down a statutory procedure for varying fares charged by Hackney Carriage drivers. When setting Hackney Carriage fares there is no requirement under the Act to take into account external factors, and there is no limit on the amount of increase or variation.

1.4 The latest fares for Hackney Carriages for both West Suffolk Councils can be found at **Appendix 1**.

1.5 The Licensing and Regulatory Committee under the Council's Constitution can set or refuse hackney fares. It has been agreed that they will be reviewed annually. However, on this occasion, the review is anticipating the alignment of the fares in respect of the 'Single Council approach'.

1.6 The current tariffs for St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils differ widely. Therefore, it is proposed that fees should be aligned in two stages.

1.7 **Stage 1** has been to bring members of the hackney trade from both Authorities in a group for discussion as to the first round of changes which would align the amount of tariffs and close the gaps to the running miles prices/flags.

1.8 From the discussions, the group has formulated a proposed new set of fares which can be found in **Appendix 2**. Side by side comparisons and running miles can be found in **Appendix 3**.

1.9 The tariffs proposed have been scrutinised by our meter agents (Digitax and Panther Taxis) who calibrate our hackney meters. They have made some minor amendments and are in agreement that they significantly align most of the differing tariffs at this stage, particularly for tariff 1

1.10 **Stage 2** will be for Licensing and Regulatory committee to choose one of the new tariffs for all hackneys for the commencement of Single Council in 2019.

1.11 **Stage 2** can either be considered by members during this committee or at a later date closer to Single Council commencement.

Consultation

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2.1 The Council is only required to consult on the proposed fares with members of the public. However, **all** licensed drivers across West Suffolk Councils were written to and given an opportunity to give feedback. Not all licensed drivers drive hackney vehicles, however, all licensed drivers receive a combined Hackney and Private Hire licence. A copy of the letter and consultation form can be found at **Appendix 4**.

Out of the 671 combined hackney/private hire drivers were consulted, there are 475 drivers in St Edmundsbury and 196 in Forest Heath: (N.B. figures are correct at the time of the report).

2.2

There are 66 licensed Hackney vehicles in St Edmundsbury and 131 licensed Hackney vehicles in Forest heath.

2.3

Out of the 26 responses, 18 were received from Forest Heath licensees and 8 from St Edmundsbury licensees.

2.4

- 6 responded against the proposed fares alignment
- 17 responded in favour of the proposed fare alignment
- 3 had no comment to make
- 0 requested more proposals.

Some of the responses declined the Stage 1 fare alignment. However, they were in favour of the two authorities completely aligning all fares and the livery for hackneys.

Raw data from this consultation is available in **Appendix 5**

Options

The Committee is requested to consider the options listed below.

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3.1 **Option 1:** Approve and advertise the proposed **new** hackney Carriage fares for Forest Heath

3.1.1 **Option 2:** Approve the advertising of the proposed **new** hackney Carriage fares devised for Forest Heath **and** recommend which set of fares to be considered for **Stage 2** to be in place for Single Council in 2019.

3.1.2

Public consultation

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4.1 If the Committee proceeds with Options 1 or 2 then an advertisement setting out the increased fares must be placed in at least one local newspaper. Members of the public will have 14 days from the date of the advertisement in which to submit any representations for or against the fare increase / decrease. If objections are received then they must be considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee before the proposed fare changes can be implemented.

4.2

If no objections are received, the revised table of fares will come into effect on the date specified (not less than 14 days after publication in the newspaper of the notice). If there are objections the Council must set a further date within 2 months of the above date on which the new fares will come into force following further consideration by Members.