

Equality Screening Form

Question	Response
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2019
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	To harmonise the current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury hackney carriage fares ahead of the creation of a single authority for West Suffolk in April 2019. This EQIA considers the impacts on all groups who use and drive taxi vehicles throughout West Suffolk.
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	All residents across West Suffolk will benefit from the proposal to remove the charges for extra passengers as it will be clearer and more transparent how much they owe for their journey. This particular proposal will also benefit taxi drivers as many drivers had raised safety and wellbeing concerns as customers challenged drivers who they believed were making illegal additions to the meter when using the extras option, reportedly refusing to pay (the petition stated this had happened on 155 occasions).
Q4 Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of participation • Uptake by different groups • Needs or experiences of different groups • Priorities • Other areas? 	<p>The fare change includes a package of measures, which overall equates to a 3.3% rise in fares. This relates to the average annual increase in consumer price index and fuel prices.. The proportional increase compared to the current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury fares varies according to tariff and the distance/time of a trip.</p> <p>The fare cards are complex and follow a set structure common to all local authorities. Costs of a running mile are commonly used to allow for comparison. The running mile costs for the 2018</p>

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury fares were aligned in June 2018 so the increase for each tariff is consistent across West Suffolk.

Tariff	Current running mile (£)	Proposed fares running mile (option 1i) (£)	Percentage increase
1	1.77	1.85	4.5%
2	2.35	2.42	3.1%
3	3.61	3.70	2.5%
-	AVERAGE % INCREASE		3.3%

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury fare cards currently have different thresholds for time and distance for each tariff. Despite the overall running miles costs being the same, the alignment of these specifics details mean that some journeys may work out cheaper for customers in one part of West Suffolk, while some may rise slightly more than 3.3%. This mainly depends on the distance of that journey. For example, a 1 mile journey on tariff 1 in Forest Heath currently costs £3.85, £3.80 in St Edmundsbury and £4.20 under the proposed fares. This shows there is a slightly higher increase in St Edmundsbury.

Given that West Suffolk is predominantly rural many journeys are above the national average of 2-5 miles (according to Department for Transport statistics 2017. A 10 mile journey on tariff 3 currently costs £39.73 in Forest Heath, £40.49 in St Edmundsbury and £41.74 under the proposed West Suffolk fares.

This shows there is a slightly higher increase for customers current Forest Heath area.

Data from the Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics 2018 showed that those in the lowest real income quintile made 14 taxi or PHV trips per year¹. There is therefore potential for those on a low income and experiencing rural isolation to be negatively impacted by the slight increase in fares.

Although there are no data available on the reliance on hackney carriages for those experiencing rural isolation, data from the Department for Transport found that in 2017, taxi passengers in rural areas tended to have the lowest overall satisfaction². There is therefore a risk that the increase in fares in Forest Heath will further lower customer satisfaction levels. Although there are no data available to support this, those suffering from rural isolation may be more likely to rely on hackney carriages due to a lack of other transport options. Forest Heath is classified as mainly rural compared with St Edmundsbury which is largely rural³, which again demonstrates how the fare increases will disproportionately impact on those in Forest Heath on a low income (particularly those not living in the district's towns).

The increase in fares may deter some residents from using taxis, negatively impacting on the income of hackney carriage drivers,

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/751202/taxi-and-phv-england-2018.pdf

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/751202/taxi-and-phv-england-2018.pdf

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591466/Local_Authority_Districts_ranked_by_rural_and_rural-related_populations_with_Rural_Urban_Classification.pdf

who are disproportionately male (96%) and middle aged according to recent statistics from the Department for Transport. Data also showed that in 2017/18, the two main ethnic groups of drivers were White and Asian or Asian British (49% and 38% respectively). Anecdotal evidence from taxi drivers suggests that a higher proportion of drivers in Forest Heath are from Asian backgrounds. The possibility of the increase in fares deterring customers from using taxis in this area will therefore impact this group, however the specific policy will not disproportionately adversely impact this group.

There has been a steady increase in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) since late 2015 which supports the increase in fares. From April 2017 the CPI levelled off, ranging between 2.6 and 2.8%. Further, government data on the average annual prices of road fuels shows an increase from 2016 – 2018:

Year	Premium unleaded⁴	Diesel
2008	107.59	117.92
2009	98.86	103.86
2010	116.34	118.60
2011	133.27	138.72
2012	135.39	141.83
2013	134.15	140.41
2014	127.50	133.46
2015	111.13	114.90
2016	108.85	110.13
2017	117.41	120.06
2018 so far	120.96	124.44

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/oil-and-petroleum-products-monthly-statistics>

There are other policy implications which may impact on those with a protected characteristic. All options apart from option 3 include removing the use of the 'extras' button to charge for additional passengers. Option 1 considers different ways to charges for additional passengers, including a one-off charge of £3.00 for vehicles carrying more than four passengers. This has potential to positively impact all groups as it removes the risk of drivers abusing the extras button. Cambridge City Council decided to implement a one-off charge of £3.00 in January 2012 following concerns raised by Cambridge City Licensed Taxis Limited that a charge per passenger was open to being abused by drivers.

Removing the extras button on vehicles will particularly benefit more vulnerable passengers, such as the elderly and those with a disability. The now closed Office of Fair Trading argue that these groups are more susceptible to overcharging as they are more likely to be in a weaker bargaining position due to being less able to take alternative forms of transport⁵. This is particularly relevant to those with mobility difficulties as the Department of Transport found that, in 2017, this group used Taxis more than people who do not (19 trips per person versus 9 trips per person).

⁵ http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140402181227/http://www.offt.gov.uk/shared_offt/reports/comp_policy/oft676.pdf

<p>Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon:</p> <p>(i) Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No</p> <p>(ii) Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity?</p>	<p>(i) Yes – passengers will experience an increase in fares, which may have a disproportionate impact on those on a low income and those suffering from rural isolation.</p> <p>(ii) There are opportunities for positive impact for all individuals. The proposal to remove the extras charges for additional passengers will increase transparency and making it easier for customers to know how much they have to pay, simplifying transactions.</p>
<p>Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.</p>	<p>NB The impacts table considers the impact of the <i>changes</i> in the fare structure needed to create a harmonised structure for West Suffolk, not the annual fare increase.</p>

Impacts Table

	Is there potential for negative impact? YES or NO	Are there opportunities for positive impact? YES or NO	If YES, please provide details of the impact below	
			Positive Impact	Negative Impact
All groups or society generally	NO	YES	The option to remove the charges for each	

			extra passenger will improve simplicity and transparency of payments.	
Age - Older or younger people	NO	YES	Elderly people are potentially more vulnerable to overcharging therefore the proposal to remove extra charges will alleviate any potential for drivers to overcharge.	
Disability - People with a disability	NO	YES	In 2017, individuals with a disability used taxis an average of 19 times (per person, per year). This group are particularly vulnerable to being overcharged, therefore the	

			option to remove the extra fees button in taxis will alleviate this risk.	
Sex - Women or men	YES	NO		In 2017, 96% of taxi drivers were male. If the increase in fares discourages people from using taxis, the decrease in trade will disproportionately impact on this group. However, this does not raise any specific equalities concerns as this reflects the nature of the industry as a whole.
Pregnancy or maternity - including expectant or new parents i.e. pregnancy and maternity	NO	NO		

Marriage and civil partnership – including same sex couples	NO	NO		
Race - People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	NO	NO		Anecdotal evidence from taxi drivers suggests that a high proportion of drivers in Forest Heath are from Asian backgrounds. The possibility of the increase in fares deterring people customers from using taxis in this area will therefore impact this group, however the specific policy will not disproportionately affect this group.
Religion - People with a religion or belief (or who choose not to have a religion or belief)	NO	NO		

Sexual Orientation - People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or in a Civil Partnership	NO	NO		
Gender Reassignment - People who are transitioning from one gender to another	NO	NO		
<i>Families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities (The Families Test)</i>	NO	NO		
<i>Individuals on low income</i>	YES	NO		Customers across West Suffolk will experience an average 3.3% increase in fares in certain circumstances. This increase could disproportionately affect those on a lower income. However this increase is in line with inflation (as indicated by the increase in CPI) and rising fuel costs, in order to ensure income is

				sustainable for the taxi trade.
<i>Those suffering rural isolation</i>	YES	NO		West Suffolk is classified as predominantly rural therefore a lack of transport options and sparsity of the area if not living one of the towns may mean this group are more reliant on taxis. The increase in some fares may put this group off using taxis in future.
<i>Those who do not have English as a first language</i>	NO	NO		

Action Plan

Equality group/ characteristic	Action/milestone	Responsibility (Project manager or partner organisation)	Achievement date	Monitoring arrangements
All groups	<p>Demand and capacity survey* to establish waiting times and measure supply and demand. This will also include interviews with taxi customers for their views on the service as a customer, including hackney carriage fares.</p> <p>*formally known as an 'unmet demand survey' but is not confined to use when there is an unmet demand</p>			
All groups	<p>The agreement on fares will be subject to a 2 week public consultation period. The Licensing and Regulatory Committees would meet again in January in the event of any objections to consider amendments.</p>			

Sign off section

This Screening Level EqIA was completed by:

Name

Job Title

Signature

Date 16/11/18

On completion, please submit this document with the policy or proposal. Guidance and advice on draft and final versions can be obtained from:

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