

EXECUTIVE 10th November 2022

Report Title	Hackney Carriage Fares Tariff
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Lead Member	Cllr David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Public Consultation Adverts

Appendix B: Previous Tariff of Fares

Appendix C: Consultation Responses Received

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding objections received to the proposed increase to the Hackney Carriage Fares Tariff/Table of Fares in the Corby zone.
- 1.2 Executive is asked to consider the objections received and determine whether the increases agreed at the meeting on 27th September 2022 should stand or whether they should be amended noting that any revised Fares Tariff/Table of Fares recommended are the maximum amount that can be charged, and Hackney Carriage Proprietors are at liberty to charge a lower fare.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Licensing Authority has a discretionary power to fix the rate of Hackney Carriage fares within its area and publish a “Table of Fares” which must be displayed in every Hackney Carriage vehicle. Once set, the tariff is the maximum

amount that can be charged by Hackney Carriage Proprietors for all journeys starting and ending in the prescribed geographical area. Hackney Carriage Proprietors can charge a lower fare if they wish but it is an offence to charge more.

- 2.2 Members should be mindful of the need to balance the interests of Hackney Carriage Proprietors with that of the travelling public who use Hackney Carriages. All parties will be impacted by the cost of living pressures.
- 2.3 The Licensing and Appeals Committee considered the matter at their meeting on 9th August 2022 and the Executive determined the new Table of Fares at its meeting on 27th September 2022.
- 2.4 The four Table of Fares for the four zones approved by the Executive on 27th September, were published and shared with the public between 13th and 27th October 2022. A copy of the public notices advertised are included in **Appendix A**.
- 2.5 The Council received 515 objections relating to the Corby Zone. Where the Council receives objections, there is an obligation to further consider the matter before making its final decision and implementing any increase.
- 2.6 No objections were received relating to the East, Kettering or Wellingborough zones, therefore the advertised Table of Fares approved on 27th September, can now be implemented in these zones.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive;
 - a) Approve an increase in fares in the Corby zone based upon the aligned fare tariff detailed in the public notice within **Appendix A**
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendation: The trade previously made representation that an increase in fares is required to ensure that the increased costs of running the service are covered. Since there were no objections received for the East, Kettering or Wellingborough zone, three aligned Table of Fares have been introduced in these areas. Full alignment of fares across all four zones is considered to be important, so that all residents within North Northamptonshire will be subject to the same maximum fare, regardless of where they reside or work.
- 3.3 Alternative Options Considered: The below options were considered for the Corby zone on 27th September 2022 and can be reconsidered;
 - i) To recommend the approval of the Corby Hackney Owners Association (CHOA) proposed increase in fare tariff
 - ii) To recommend a different increase in fares
 - iii) Refuse any increase

4. Report Background

4.1 There are currently four separate Hackney Carriage zones aligned to the previous four sovereign council districts and the fares must be separately considered and set for each zone. This will continue until a resolution is passed to remove the zones and designate one new Hackney Carriage licensing area for the whole of North Northamptonshire.

4.2 The previous tariff of fares for each zone are detailed within **Appendix B**. On 27th September 2022, the Executive agreed to replace these Table of Fares with a new aligned tariff which equates to the below fares in each of the four zones for a one, two and five mile reference journey;

Zone	1 mile	2 miles	5 miles
Corby	4.40	6.80	14.00
East	4.40	6.80	14.00
Kettering	4.40	6.80	14.00
Wellingborough	4.40	6.80	14.00

4.3 The Council is obliged to publish any proposed updated Table of Fares for a 14-day period, and this took place between 13th and 27th October 2022. No objections were received relating to the East, Kettering or Wellingborough zone, therefore the Table of Fares approved on 27th September can now be implemented in these zones as detailed in the public notice within **Appendix A**.

4.4 515 objections were received relating to the Corby zone. Of that total, 451 mirror each other exactly by referring to one or more of the following paragraphs:

- I would like to object to the proposed increase in Taxi Fares as I believe this is not in the interests of the public to increase fares by this amount. I also believe that due to the recent campaigns by Taxi Drivers, they do not believe this fare is appropriate during the cost-of-living crisis. I do believe there should be an appropriate increase.
- As a Taxi Customer, I believe this fare increase is unfair, and during a 'cost of living crisis' this will impact me.
- I believe that this is not in the public interest, and due to the recent campaign driven by the Taxi Drivers of Corby, it is clear that they do not support this proposal of fare increases.
- I urge North Northamptonshire Council to reconsider this proposal, and consult with the Taxi Drivers of Corby, and the Public through a forum to decide on an appropriate fare increase.
- This objection is not to a fare increase at all, but to the proposed fare increase by North Northamptonshire Council.

4.5 In addition to these objections which mirror each other, there were 64 additional responses, whose text is provided at **Appendix C**, which identify the following issues;

- Strong view that taxis in Corby are an inherent part of the public transport system, being used to go to work, the shops, medical appointments, for children to get to school and for socialising.
- Views that this decision will impact those on lower incomes, the elderly and those with mobility issues for the above reasons.
- That the additional cost will force individuals to walk instead of taking a taxi which could result in an increase in the number of assaults, anti-social behaviour and general fear, which could all impact upon mental health. There is also a perception that increased costs could result in people resorting to driving their own vehicles under the influence of alcohol.
- Impact on businesses if people cannot access shops or travel to work.
- Bus services are being reduced and some areas do not have access to a bus service so rely on the use of taxis.
- Elderly people who live outside of Corby rely on taxi services to access medical health services, to shop, to access the town centre or just to visit and meet friends, which is considered to be essential for their mental health.
- Parents who don't drive, or have access to a free school bus, will be impacted since they use shared taxis to get children to school.
- Many people in Corby work in low paid jobs and often work irregular hours and need to use taxis as the buses route/times available do not fit in with their work schedules. The increases proposed are considered to be unaffordable and will have a direct impact on their ability to attend work. This will also impact employers and businesses alike.
- Impact on local businesses, with reduced footfall in shopping areas and patronage in pubs and clubs.
- Reduced business and therefore income for Hackney Carriage drivers.

4.6 A number of the scenarios mentioned in the responses received, refer to journeys which would be pre-booked rather than starting from the taxi rank or after hailing a vehicle. It should be noted that where journeys are booked in advance, the fare can be agreed between the driver and the customer before the start of the journey and there is no requirement for the fare to be calculated by the meter, as long as the fare paid does not exceed the maximum stipulated in the Table of Fares.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 It is important to note that the tariff of fares stipulates the maximum fare that can be charged, and drivers can charge less if they wish and can choose not to apply any permitted uplifts.

- 5.2 If it is considered appropriate to amend the previously agreed tariff of fares based upon the consultation responses received, the options to be considered are detailed in paragraph 3.3.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 If agreed, the proposed tariff for the Corby zone will come into effect on 24th November 2022, unless it is called in for consideration by the Scrutiny Commission, in which case the Council will be required to implement the new tariff before 11th January to meet statutory requirements as detailed in paragraph 7.2.6.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposals to the Council, however there will be potential financial implications for Hackney Carriage proprietors and for the travelling public whatever decision is made.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 A Local Authority has the power to set fares for Hackney Carriages under the provisions of section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which stipulates the Council can fix the rates or fares (which can include time and distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle) by way of a table of fares (s.65(1))
- 7.2.2 There is a prescribed process that should be followed by a Local Authority when considering a tariff increase:
- 7.2.3 Where a council makes or varies a table of fares, they shall publish in at least one local newspaper a notice setting out the table of fares and/or variation specifying the period (not less than 14 days from the date of first publication) and the manner in which objections to the table of fares or variation can be made (s.65(2)(a)).
- 7.2.4 The notice should also be available at the council offices for a period of 14 days from the date of first publication and be open to the public for inspection without payment during reasonable hours (s.65(2)(b)).
- 7.2.5 If no objection is made within the period specified in the notice or if objections are withdrawn, the fares shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection (whichever date is later) (s.65(3)).
- 7.2.6 If the objection(s) is not withdrawn 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 modification as decided by them after consideration of the objections (s.65(4)).

7.2.7 Any fares previously made under s.65 fixing the rates and fares or any table of fares previously shall cease to have effect (s.65(6)).

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 Raising Hackney Carriage fares will ensure that the Hackney Carriage trade remains financially viable and will assist the Council in achieving its Corporate Plan priority of enabling people to travel across North Northamptonshire, and beyond.

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 Members should be mindful that the rise in the cost of living has increased costs for taxi drivers which they will need to recover and allowing them to increase their fares will assist. Failure to allow taxi drivers to cover their costs could result in a number of them leaving the profession, reducing the number of taxis available.

7.4.2 The financial impact of rising taxi fares on the travelling public who also face increased costs should also be considered and increased fares could result in customers using taxis less, which could also have an impact on the trade.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 The Hackney Carriage trade were consulted on options available for an aligned tariff of fares and the results of this consultation were considered by the Executive on 27th September 2022.

7.5.2 The proposed updated Table of Fares approved on 27th September was open for public comment between 13th and 27th October. Separate consultations were undertaken for each of the four zones and a copy of the advertisements placed in the local press are enclosed within **Appendix A**. This information was also made available at each of the principal council offices.

7.5.3 Hackney Carriage licence holders and organisations which represent groups of people who may have a reliance on the use of taxi's, were also made aware of the consultation and invited to provide a response.

7.5.4 Objections received against implementing the suggested changes are detailed within the report or enclosed within **Appendix C** to the report, to allow them to be formally considered, before any altered fare structure is implemented.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 This report has not been considered through the Executive Advisory Panel process.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 This report has not been considered by the Scrutiny Commission but could form part of the future work programme.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 Although an increase in fares applies equally to everyone, people who are more reliant on the use of taxi's, such as those with mobility issues or those who live in more rural communities and are more elderly, may be disproportionately negatively impacted by an increase in fares. There is however insufficient data for us to identify the proportion of these groups of people that regularly use public transport, or whether they would be able to afford any increase in taxi fares.

7.8.2 An initial equalities screening assessment identified a potential negative impact from a change in the tariff of fares on differing age groups and people with a disability, therefore a full equalities impact assessment has been carried out.

7.8.3 Organisations representing these groups of people who may have an increased reliance on the use of taxi's, were consulted as part of the public consultation exercise, so that these considerations could be fully assessed.

7.9 Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1 There are no significant climate impacts arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 The Council's discretionary power to determine fares is utilised so as to enable the taxi trade to operate effectively whilst ensuring that the general public can continue to afford to use them. Hackney Carriages provide a valuable door to door service for the community.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 There are no significant crime and disorder impacts arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976: [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

8.2 Licensing and Appeals Committee papers 9th August 2022: [Agenda for Licensing and Appeals Committee on Tuesday 9th August, 2022, 6.00 pm - North Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

8.3 Equalities Impact Assessment:

8.4 Executive Report papers 27th September 2022: [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday 27th September, 2022, 10.00 am - North Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2022/09/27/agenda-for-executive-on-tuesday-27th-september-2022-10.00-am-north-northamptonshire-council)