

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Portfolio Holder (Operational Services)

Date: 23 October 2019

Reporting officer: Regulatory Services Manager

Subject: Review of Taxi Tariff

Purpose and summary of report:

To present the Portfolio Holder (Operational Services) with the outcome of the recent consultation with Gravesham-licensed Hackney Carriage drivers in relation to their request to review the current table of fares (the taxi tariff).

Recommendations:

That, under the delegated powers set out in Annex 1.6 of the Councils' Constitution, the Portfolio Holder (Operational Services):

1. Agrees to replace the current taxi tariff with the trade-proposed tariff (attached at Appendix 3)
2. Instructs the Regulatory Services Manager to proceed with and complete the tariff setting process in the minimum timeframe allowed by legislation.
3. Agrees that the new tariff will be kept under review and the next review of the taxi tariff shall take place no later than September 2021 in accordance with the previously agreed two-yearly timetable.

1. Background

- 1.1 A report was brought before the Operational Services Cabinet Committee on 9 July 2019 following a request from the local taxi trade to consult on a revised taxi tariff, proposed by them.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Committee duly:
 - 1.2.1 Considered the content of the report, including the taxi trade's request to review the current taxi tariff, the tariff proposed by them, and the proposed consultation methodology; and
 - 1.2.2 Instructed the Regulatory Services Manager to consult with the local taxi trade as set out in the proposed consultation methodology contained in section 3 of that report.

2. Consultation Outcome

- 2.1 The taxi trade was subsequently consulted in accordance with the aforementioned consultation methodology.
- 2.2 In accordance with section 3.3 of the report brought before the Operational Services Cabinet Committee on 9 July 2019, the results from the consultation have been collated and are set out below:
 - 2.2.1 Of the 160 taxi drivers consulted, 72 (45%) responded before the consultation end date.
 - 2.2.2 Of the 72 drivers that responded, 64 (89%) voted in favour of the trade-proposed tariff.

3. Summary and Recommendations

- 3.1 Notwithstanding the fact that 55% of local taxi drivers did not respond to the consultation, in light of the high percentage of responses in favour of the trade-proposed tariff, it is recommended that the Portfolio Holder (Operational Services):
 - 3.1.1 Agrees to replace the current taxi tariff with the trade-proposed tariff (attached at Appendix 3)
 - 3.1.2 Instructs the Regulatory Services Manager to proceed with and complete the tariff setting process in the minimum timeframe allowed by legislation.
 - 3.1.3 Agrees that the new tariff will be kept under review and the next review of the taxi tariff shall take place no later than September 2021 in accordance with the previously agreed two-yearly timetable.

using powers already delegated to him in the Constitution.
- 3.2 It is however recommended that, in completing the tariff setting process, it is made unequivocally clear to the taxi trade that the new tariff, that all taxis must adhere to, was both proposed and voted for by the trade themselves.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 None. Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

<p>Legal</p>	<p>The authority for the council to fix fares for hackney carriages is given under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. When a council makes or varies a table of fares, it must publish in one local newspaper a notice setting out the table of fares, or variations to the table, specifying the period (not less than 14 days) within which, objections to the table or variations can be made.</p> <p>A copy of the proposed tariff must then be available at the council's offices for the public to inspect, free of charge, at all reasonable hours.</p> <p>If there are no objections, the table, or variation, will come into effect on the expiration date of the period specified in the notice.</p> <p>If there are objections the council must set a further date, within two months after the date first specified, on which the table is to come into force with or without modification, as decided. Any such modification would be dealt with by the portfolio holder using powers already delegated to them in the Constitution.</p>
<p>Finance and Value for Money</p>	<p>The cost of re-calibrating individual meters would be met by individual hackney carriage proprietors.</p> <p>The cost of the newspaper advertisement (required when changing the tariff) would be accommodated from within the licensing budget.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment</p>	<p>An unreasonably expensive tariff could be a source of resentment amongst the travelling public. Equally, and just as importantly, the council's tariff limits the earning potential of its licensed taxi trade and so an unreasonably low tariff could be a source of resentment amongst the trade.</p> <p>An overly complicated tariff structure increases the risk of the travelling public being overcharged or miscalculating the expected fare, resulting in complaints or an inability to pay for a journey.</p> <p>The trade-proposed tariff is not significantly different to the current tariff.</p>
<p>Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Screening for Equality Impacts</p> <p>Question</p> <p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>Yes – An overly expensive taxi tariff may affect the ability of those on a low income to afford a taxi. Members need to weigh up the effect of all potential users of taxis against the needs of the trade who provide the service to local users.</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>No</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>

Corporate Plan	<p>There are links to:</p> <p>Objective 1 – Safer Gravesham Objective 2 – Stronger Gravesham Objective 4 - Sound and Self Sufficient Council</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>There are obvious links to community safety in ensuring an adequate supply of properly licensed taxis as a safe mode of transport for the public, particularly when other public transport is unavailable, for example during the night time economy period. An unreasonably low earning potential could reduce the number of licensed taxis and also therefore the ability for people to get home, or elsewhere, safely.</p> <p>Charging more than the maximum permitted fare is an offence. Ensuring a simple tariff structure, that is easy for the public and drivers to understand, can reduce the likelihood of taxi meters being set at a higher than permitted rate, or for additional charges inadvertently being made.</p>
Digital and website implications	<p>The Digital Team would be asked to upload a copy of any updated Tariff on to the council's website and may be asked to assist in publicising any changes approved.</p>
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	<p>The current version of the council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy includes mandatory safeguarding training as a pre-requisite to being able to apply for a licence, and is also a module within the local knowledge test. Drivers and operators are required by way of licence conditions to report concerns of CSE to Kent Police. The policy also includes guidance on the use of interim/immediate suspensions, which could potentially be used in instances of suspected or confirmed CSE to safeguard the public.</p>

APPENDIX 2 – CURRENT TARIFF

Rate 1	
For the first 320 yards	£2.70
For each subsequent 160 yards or part thereof	£0.20

Rate 2	
For any hiring commenced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at any time on a bank holiday or public holiday between 18:00 and midnight on 24 December and 31 December between midnight and 06:00 on any other day 	Rate 1 + 50%

Rate 3	
For any hiring commenced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> between 00:01 on 25 December and 06.00 on 27 December between 00.01 on 1 January and 06.00 on 2 January 	Rate 1 + 100%

Waiting Time	
For each period of 20 seconds	£0.10

Extra Charges	
For any hiring commenced on Sundays between 06:00 and midnight (only applicable on Rate 1)	£0.60
For each person above the number of four carried	£1.50
Any sundry expenses incurred (i.e. Toll Charges, Parking fees, Ferry Fees, Congestion Charges)	Amount Incurred
If vehicle is soiled to the extent that it has to be cleansed before re-use	£75.00

APPENDIX 3 – TRADE-PROPOSED TARIFF

Rate 1	
For the first 320 yards	£2.80
For each subsequent 160 yards or part thereof, or each stationary waiting period of 40 seconds	£0.20
After 6 miles, for each additional 135.39 yards or part thereof, or each stationary waiting period of 40 seconds	£0.20

Rate 2	
For any hiring commenced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at any time on a bank holiday or public holiday • between 18:00 and midnight on 24 December and 31 December • between midnight and 06:00 on any other day • at any time when carrying 5 to 8 passengers other than when Rate 4 would be in effect 	Rate 1 + 50%

Rate 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any hiring commenced on Sundays between 06:00 and midnight when carrying 1 to 4 passengers 	Rate 1 + £0.60

Rate 4	
For any hiring commenced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between 00:01 on 25 December and 06.00 on 27 December • between 00.01 on 1 January and 06.00 on 2 January • between midnight and 06:00 when carrying 5 to 8 passengers 	Rate 1 + 100%

Rate 5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any hiring commenced on Sundays between 06:00 and midnight when carrying 5 to 8 passengers 	Rate 2 + £0.60

Extra Charges	
Any sundry expenses incurred (i.e. Toll Charges, Parking fees, Ferry Fees, Congestion Charges)	Amount Incurred
If vehicle is soiled to the extent that it has to be cleansed before re-use	£75.00