

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider a request from the Aylesbury Hackney Carriage Association for a variation in the tariff of fares.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Principal Licensing Officer be authorised to conduct the statutory consultation in accordance with Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in respect to the proposed new tariff as set out in Appendix 2 to this report
- 2.2 That, if no objections are received, the Principal Licensing Officer to progress the adoption of the new tariff for the rural zone in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Waste and Licensing who will make the final decision on adoption.
- 2.3 That, if any objections are received and not withdrawn, they are reported to Licensing Committee for further consideration.

3 Supporting information

- 3.1 The present tariff for hackney carriage fares in respect of taxis operating in Aylesbury Town were last reviewed in April 2010. The fares in respect of rural hackney carriages, i.e. those operating outside of Aylesbury Town, were reviewed in November 2016. The current fares in respect of both categories of hackney carriage are shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Local authorities have the power to set fares for hackney carriages under section 65 of the Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. In varying the fares, the Council must publish in at least one local newspaper the proposed tariff for a period of not less than 14 days and invite objections. A copy of the notice shall also be available for inspection at the council offices.
- 3.3 The Aylesbury Carriage Taxi Association, which represents the taxi drivers operating in Aylesbury Town, proposed a new tariff on behalf of their members last year. The proposal was considered by the Licensing Committee on 11 December 2018 with representatives from the ACTA present. At the meeting a number of unintended anomalies were identified within the proposal and the Committee resolved that the matter should be adjourned and a new fare proposal be brought back at a future date.
- 3.4 The Principal Licensing Officer has since met with representatives from the ACTA and a new proposed of fares has been prepared, as shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Within the new schedule of fares the following changes are proposed:
- 3.6 The basic fare (tariff 1) will change from a minimum fare of £3.00 for a one mile journey, to a minimum fare of £3.00 for a journey of 1320 yards (3/4 of a mile).
- 3.7 Increments beyond 1320 yards will be based on a standard distance 110 yards (1/16th of a mile) regardless of distance. The current fares use a distance of 1/13th of a mile to measure fare increments for journeys between one mile and five miles and then 1/16th of a mile thereafter. This causes complications when calculating fares and calibrating meters. Firstly because

of the added complication of having two different measures of distances and secondly because one mile cannot be neatly divided into 13^{ths}.

- 3.8 The proposed waiting time tariff is amended from 40 second intervals to 30 second intervals.
- 3.9 Bank holiday journeys, save Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, are increased to tariff 2. Under the current fares Bank Holiday journeys are the same rate as a normal working day.
- 3.10 For journeys involving 5 or more passengers it is proposed that the next highest tariff is used. The current tariff arrangements include an additional flat charge for additional passengers however it is reported by drivers that this leads to disputes with customers who mistakenly believe that they are being overcharged when the additional charge is added to the meter at the end of the journey.
- 3.11 The current fare for additional luggage has been removed and a new 'soiling' charge has been included.
- 3.12 Finally, reference to fares for journeys outside the district and the payment of booking fees has been included. For journeys ending outside the District hackney carriage drivers do not need to comply with the approved fares (i.e. use the meter) providing the fare is agreed with the customer in advance, otherwise the meter must be used. Hackney carriages used for private hire work cannot charge more than equivalent maximum on the approved table of fares. Furthermore the fare can only be charged from the point the journey starts, i.e. no fare can be charged for travelling to the pick-up point (Section 67, LGMPA 1976). However a booking fee can be charged, providing it is included in the approved table of fares.
- 3.13 For comparison purposes, appendix 3 shows the cost of a 2 mile journey under the current fares, this cost plus inflation since the fares were last set and finally the cost under the proposed fares. As can be seen, under the proposed fares the cost of the average two mile journey is less than the current fares plus inflation measure, save for a daytime Bank Holiday journey.
- 3.14 Currently Aylesbury Vale has one of the lowest hackney carriage fares in the country: for a two mile journey Aylesbury is ranked 355 lowest out of 358 local authority areas as listed on the PHTM league of fares. It is important to note that, even with proposed increase in fares, Aylesbury Vale would continue to present one of the cheapest fares for an average two mile journey when compared to the tariffs of other local authorities. Appendix 4 shows the current tariff league table for hackney carriage fares published in March 2019. A two mile journey on tariff 1 at the proposed new rate of fares would equate to £5.00, which would place Aylesbury 320 lowest out of 358 listed.
- 3.15 Once agreed, the new tariffs are calibrated on to the taxi meter, which automatically calculates the fare depending on the journey distance, time of day and other criteria indicated. The meter is "calendar controlled" which ensures that the tariff is set within the meter itself and cannot be altered by the driver. The hackney carriage proprietors have discretion to charge less than is displayed on the meter but are not permitted to charge more.

4 Options considered

- 4.1 No other options considered.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The rise in tariffs is requested by the Aylesbury Hackney Carriage Association which represents the taxis operating within the Aylesbury Town area. The fares have not been revised for a considerable time and an increase is needed to reflect the increase in running costs. Even allowing for the proposed increase, Aylesbury will continue to offer one of the lowest tariffs in the Country.
- 5.2 The proposed fares are subject to public consultation. The Licensing Committee will have the opportunity to give the proposal further consideration should any comments be submitted during the consultation period.

6 Resource implications

- 6.1 There are financial implications in placing an advert in a local paper. This additional cost be considered when the next licence fee review takes place.

Contact Officer	Simon Gallacher Ext 5083
Background Documents	None