

Report to the Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 11th April 2012



**Epping Forest
District Council**

**Subject: The installation of Meters in Hackney Carriages
and the setting of Fares**

Officer contact for further information: Alison Mitchell

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendation/Decisions Required:

- 1. To agree that the Senior Licensing Officer carries out a consultation with a view to recommending a fare tariff in respect of journeys undertaken in Hackney Carriages in the District.**
- 2. To require that meters are fixed into Hackney Carriages licensed in this area and that they are inspected at regular intervals.**
- 3. To appoint a person or company to carry out this work at the cost of the Hackney Carriage Proprietor.**

Report:

Background

1. The Authority was requested by the Epping Forest Taxi Association which represents some independent taxi drivers in the district to consider fixing a fare tariff and requiring all hackney carriages to have a taximeter installed. A consultation on the setting of a tariff was carried out at the same time as the consultation on siting taxi ranks. 131 respondents agreed that the Authority should set the fares 51 were against the proposition.

Authorities Power to fix fares

2. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that the Authority may fix the rate of fares within the district. A tariff fixed by the Authority may permit different rates to be charged at different times of the day and on bank holidays or other specified days.
3. Notice of the fares must then be published in a local newspaper and deposited at the Council's Offices for inspection. Any objections must be considered. The original or amended fare tariff would then come into effect.
4. Setting a tariff does not prevent a driver agreeing to charge a lower fare than that set by the Authority and charges will only apply to journeys that take place within the district.

Fixing a Tariff

5. The first step would be to survey each of the taxi companies located in the district, obtain their

pricing structure, collate the data and compare this against the rates charged in the neighbouring districts. The suggested charges would be referred back to the Licensing Committee.

6. If the tariffs are agreed they would have to be advertised in a local newspaper.

Meters

7. The taximeters can be fitted through a garage or an independent dealer. It is suggested that to obtain value for money for the proprietors and to reassure the Authority that the calibration work has been carried out satisfactorily, that the Council put out to tender fitting and calibrating the meters. The cost of the work on the individual vehicles will be paid for by the vehicle proprietors.

8. There are several manufacturers and models of taximeters available. Only approved dealers have access to programming equipment and the taximeters should not be tampered with by the driver/operator. Inspections will be carried out at intervals to ensure that this does not happen.

9. Once a taximeter is fitted it is calibrated and a certificate is issued and retained by the Authority.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

10. Fixing a tariff means that there is consistent charging in the district. Taximeters are an accurate way of ensuring that the tariff is correctly applied.

11. This should reduce complaints over fares charged. However, the Licensing section does not receive many complaints in a year.

Other Options for Action:

12. Not to fix a tariff. Not all hackney carriage proprietors will be happy to install a meter and pay the cost of doing so. Indications are that a basic model of meter could cost the proprietor between £200-£245 to have purchased and fitted or by choice a more expensive model could cost up to £450 fitted

Resource Implication:

There will be a cost of advertising the tariff. This should be able to be covered from within the existing budget.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Safer and Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The reduction in complaints about overcharging

Background Papers:

The consultation documents

Impact Assessments:

It is not envisaged that any equalities issues will arise.