

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING & APPEALS COMMITTEE

3 April 2006

Report of the Chief Solicitor

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF MAXIMUM FARES

Executive summary

To report a request for variation of the Council's table of maximum hackney carriage fares to include a "time and distance" element.

1.1 Application

- 1.1.1 An application has been made to the Council by the Tonbridge and Malling Licenced Drivers Association to vary the Council's table of maximum hackney carriage fares, as follows:

Our application to the council for a fare review this year does not ask for an increase in rates, only for 'Time and Distance' to be applied to all fares. As we are the only borough in the England that still does not have this, can it please be seriously considered?

1.2 Comment

- 1.2.1 This request was also made last year, when members did not accede to the request.
- 1.2.2 The suggestion is made that this is the only authority in England not to permit "time and distance" charging. There are no officially compiled statistics on this point but, in any event, this is **not** a relevant consideration for the Committee to take into account. The duty of the Council is to balance the benefit to the trade in adopting this type of fare against the interests of the travelling public.
- 1.2.3 The present fare tariff is for "distance only", which means that charges made are related to the actual distance travelled. It has to be borne in mind that this is a **maximum** fare and that proprietors are able to charge less if they so wish, and a substantial number already chose to do so.
- 1.2.4 Under a "time and distance" tariff, the charge made for distance travelled is the same. However, in addition, the meter also records the time expended when the vehicle is stationary or travelling at a speed less than 0.1mph.

- 1.2.5 For some time, there have been concerns about the effect that a change to a "time and distance" tariff would have on fares. It will certainly be the case that the fare for a vehicle stalled in traffic there is the potential for the impact to be greater than at present rates. However, recent tests have shown that, in reality, for most normal journeys the impact is minimal – not more than 20p in most cases.
- 1.2.6 In the event that members are minded to allow a change to a "time and distance" tariff, it will be necessary to fix a rate of charge for the time element. A comparison with the rates charged by our neighbouring authorities shows that the charge (for the year 2005/2006) at Medway and Tunbridge Wells was 25p per minute, at Sevenoaks 30p per minute and at Maidstone 35p per minute, giving an average of 28.8p. As a result, I would suggest that a rate of 30p per minute might be appropriate.
- 1.2.7 Where the Council fix new fares (either by changing the rates or by adopting time and distance charging) the proposal has to be subject to public consultation before it becomes effective. This means that the proposals have to be published in a local newspaper and giving the public a minimum of 14 days in which to make representations. Notice also needs to be posted at the Council's offices. If there are no objections, the revised tariff becomes effective at the end of the time period given for representations. However, if there are objections, the Council must consider the objections at another meeting held within two months.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 Not applicable

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 Not applicable

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Members' instructions are requested.

Background papers:

Letter from Tonbridge and Malling Licenced Drivers
Association dated 24 February 2006

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