



Policy and Resources Committee 12th February 2018

Taxi Fares Consultation Response

Purpose of report

This report provides the Policy and Resources Committee with the outcome of the recent taxi fares consultation and seeks a change in approach to the implementation of the fare increase from that preferred previously.

Attachment

Appendix 1 – Consultation responses

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

1.0 Background

1.1 At the 4th September 2017 meeting of this committee, a report was presented to review the several sections of the taxi policy and to increase the taxi fares chargeable following a request from the taxi trade. Minute 151 refers and the Committee determined:

(i) That the revisions presented in the Taxi Licensing Policy be accepted and that the Policy now be submitted for consultation, subject to any minor amendments agreed by the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee;

(ii) That the preferred staged increase in the Taxi Fares Strategy be accepted and that the Strategy now be submitted for consultation; and

(iii) That if there are any significant changes to the Taxi Licensing Policy and Taxi Fares Strategy following consultation, then the Policy and Strategy be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

1.2 Two separate consultations took place for the above decisions and the taxi trade was written to advising of the two consultations. The taxi policy consultation was open for a period of 4 weeks and a further report will be brought back to this committee in relation to those consultation responses.

1.3 The taxi fares consultation was open for a period of 6 weeks as it not only affected the taxi trade but members of the public. An online survey was set up and advertised on our website to assist in gathering the consultation responses and all local authorities in the county, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire County Council Highways were also advised of the consultation. Both consultations closed on 15th December 2017

2.0 Consultation responses

- 2.1 All the consultation responses in relation to the taxi fares are provided in Appendix 1, in total there were 10 responses with 8 of those requesting the fee increase not be undertaken in two stages. As this was not the option favoured by members this report is being brought back to this committee.
- 2.2 In general the responders felt that putting the fares up in one go would be simpler, save recalibrating the meters twice in 6 months and would appear to the members of the public that there has only been one increase rather than 2 in six months.

3.0 Important issues to consider

- 3.1 This request originated from the taxi trade and as there has not been a fare increase in many years it was felt the request was reasonable considering the increase in fuel and related costs.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 A full EIA has been undertaken and can be found in appendix 2. Whilst the increase in taxi fares may affect those who are rurally isolated or those from low incomes that use the taxis it is felt that the overall fare increase is reasonable and staging the increase is unlikely to significantly mitigate the impact on this group in the longer term. The council has in place a community transport grant scheme which assists with travel for medical appointments for the affected groups.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 We are legally required to consult publically on any fare change which has been undertaken. No increase can take place until approval from this committee is given.

6.0 Risk Management

- 6.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no resource and financial implications arising from this report.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

- 8.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

9.0 Implications for our Customers

- 9.1 As stated above the fares increase is considered reasonable for customers of the taxi trade and in line with increasing costs to taxi operators. The proposal was publically consulted on and the majority agreed with a one stage increase. It should not result in additional contact being made to the council from customers.

10.0 Corporate Outcomes



10.1 The Corporate Outcomes are:

- Knowledge of Customers and Communities – through listening to the requests of the taxi trade and consulting with the public this proposal is in line with this outcome.

11.0 Recommendation




11.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the Equality Implications relating to this report (see section 4 of and Appendix 2 of this report) (*Reason - To accord with legislation and the policy of the Council*)
- (2) Approve the increase in the taxi fares in one stage (*Reason - Consistency with previous decisions*)

Legal	Power: Town and Police Clauses Act, Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: 4 th September 2017 P&R Report					
Person Originating Report: Jenny Walker, Environmental Protection Manager ☎ 01832 74(2209) ✉ jwalker@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 05/01/2018					
CFO		MO		CX	

Taxi Fare Consultation

1. This consultation is to seek your views on the uplift of the taxi fares as detailed. Please choose your preferred option:

						Response Percent	Response Total
1	Option 1: To reject the request and leave the pricing arrangements as they are.					10.00%	1
2	Option 2: To accept the request and increase both components of the fare by the amounts proposed at the same time.					80.00%	8
3	Option 3: To agree to the increases proposed, but in two stages. To initially allow the increase in the initial charge from £2.50 to £2.80, to take effect as soon after the final decision has been made, and the decrease in the length of the charging unit to occur 6 months after the increase of the initial charge. (recommended)					10.00%	1
Analysis		Mean:	2	Std. Deviation:	0.45	Satisfaction Rate:	50
		Variance:	0.2	Std. Error:	0.14		
						answered	10
						skipped	1

Comments: (10)

1	04/11/17 12:58PM ID: 66904409	The taxi meter must be re calibrated to do this in 2 parts would mean 2 calibration charges
2	06/11/17 1:39PM ID: 66993110	It's not nessary to increase fares. We have over 20 licences and financially it's not viable to do 2 increases. If the council wish to increase may be they should look at contributing to the costs
3	07/11/17 2:57PM ID: 67088032	Option 3 would appear to be the prudent option
4	09/11/17 1:05PM ID: 67240186	Surely customers would prefer one increase rather one now and another in 6 months time so it only hurts once!
5	15/11/17 7:17PM ID: 67675187	by doing both components at the same time only have to alter the meter once with one payment
6	12/12/17 7:11PM ID: 69459045	The public will think it's gone up twice in six months. And taxi operators will have to pay twice to adjust their taxi meters!
7	12/12/17 7:12PM ID: 69459326	The public will think it's gone up twice in six months. And taxi operators will have to pay twice to adjust their taxi meters!
8	14/12/17 11:01PM ID: 69633381	option 2 is what 24 taxi drivers asked for in january 2017
9	14/12/17 11:28PM ID: 69634542	I think the price increase should go up in one go, as not to cause any problems or complaints . RUSHDEN TAXI DRIVER
10	15/12/17 4:06PM ID: 69683251	I choose option 2. A two stage increase will involve two meter changes and thus two large charges.



Full Equality Impact Assessment

This form should be completed for any existing/proposed policy/function/project where the initial screening form indicates a significant impact on a specific group of individuals. It should be used whether the policy/function/project is aimed at external customers or internal staff, as equality policy applies to staffing/human resources issues as much as to external service delivery issues.

Please answer all questions/complete all sections.

If you conclude that there is a negative impact please consider what can be done to improve the equalities performance and minimise or remove the impact. This should be done using the 'Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan' table.

As a result of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), you will have checked that your policy/function/project does not have negative/adverse impacts in terms of Gender, Race, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy/Maternity, Religion or Belief (equality target groups) or if it does you will have identified relevant actions needed to minimise or remove such impact and their likely resource implications.

This is not simply a paper exercise – it is designed to make sure that your policy/function/project and service (development) is delivered fairly and effectively to all sections of our local community, and our employees.

Please note that this EIA will be used to support decisions by members and should form part of papers/reports; therefore **your completed questionnaire may become a public document, along with other committee papers.**

The term 'Proposal' will be used throughout the form as a label for what is being assessed – a new policy, new service, new strategy or a change to an existing policy/service/strategy.

1. The Proposal being assessed

Title of proposal being assessed:	Increase in taxi fares, as requested by the trade						
What type of proposal is this an assessment of?	New Policy/Strategy	Policy/Strategy Change	New Service	Change to Service	Service removal	Project	Other
<i>Put a x in the correct box</i>		x					
What are the aims and/or objectives of the proposal and the intended outcomes? <i>If assessing the impact of a proposed change please describe the aims of the change, not the original policy/service</i>	The aim of this proposal is to ensure that the taxi trade is charging a reasonable fare to customers.						
Who is intended to benefit from this proposal?	The taxi trade - which requested the increase						
Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposed proposal?	Taxi Trade, members of the public who use taxis						
How is the success of the proposal to be measured?	n/a						
Service Area/Team with responsibility for implementation of this proposal	Environmental Services						
Name and job title / role of person completing full Screening:	Jenny Walker, Environmental Protection Manager						
Date of completion:	05/01/18						

*There is an expectation that information from research and from **consultation** should be used to inform your assessment and your decision making. A variety of data sources can be used, to provide an overview about the effect of proposed measures on groups of protected characteristics. If research and consultation has not already been undertaken and is planned for the future, please note that a re-assessment of the impact will need to be made when completed.*

2. Data, Consultation Feedback and Analysis	
Source of Information <i>e.g. statistics, demographics, indicators, partner data, consultation, surveys, customer complaints, audit recommendations and comments</i>	Reasons for using this source
There are no available statistics on the proportion of the population as a whole or a proportion of those who fall within any of the protected characteristic groups that use taxis.	
A consultation on the increases of fares was conducted. No comments on any inequalities were received.	Consultation and transparency.

Now complete the table below. It may be necessary to tick more than one impact box per row (e.g. a positive impact in the Age Category for older people, but negative for younger). Ensure the final column clearly explains why you indicated a positive/negative impact, with reference to evidence obtained, as listed in section 2, above.

3. Detailed Impact Assessment by Category				
Equality Group	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	Explanation and Evidence
Gender:				
Consider Women/Girls, Men/Boys, Transgender individuals.			X	The increase in fares applies to all regardless of gender.
Sexual Orientation:				
Consider, for instance: Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals Any other sexual orientation			x	The increase in fares applies to all regardless of sexual orientation.
Race/Ethnicity:				
Consider, for instance: • White British people, • White non-British people • Asian or Asian British people • Black or Black British people • Chinese people • People of mixed heritage • Travellers (Gypsy/Roma/Irish heritage) • People from any other ethnic groups • People who do not have English as their first language			x	The increase in fares applies to all regardless of race or ethnicity.

Disability:				
Physical impairment, e.g. mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches.			X	The increase in fares applies to all passengers. The fares are set and cannot be changed regardless of any additional assistance that may be needed to help with any form of disability. This is a part of the taxi licence conditions.
Sensory impairment, e.g. blind/having a serious visual impairment, deaf/having a serious hearing impairment.			X	
Mental health condition, e.g. depression or schizophrenia			X	
Learning disability/difficulty, e.g. Down's syndrome or dyslexia, or cognitive impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder			X	
Long-standing illness or health condition, e.g. cancer, HIV. Diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy			X	
Other health problems or impairments (<i>please specify if appropriate</i>)			X	
Age:				
Older People (60+)			X	The increase in fares applies to all regardless of age.
Children and Young People (see guidance for definition)			X	

Religion/Belief:				
Consider, for instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian • Hindu • Muslim • Sikh • Buddhist • any other religion or belief (including holding no belief) 				The increase in fares applies to all regardless of religion.
Other Potentially Affected Groups				
Rural Isolation - People who live in rural areas e.g. isolated geographically, lack of internet access				There is a possibility that the increase in taxi fares may affect those in rural locations who use taxis as a form of transport. Due to the distances they would need to travel an increase may be more noticeable.
Socio-economic Exclusion – e.g. people who are on benefits, have low educational attainment, single parents, people living in poor quality housing, people who have poor access to services, the unemployed or any combination of these and the other protected strands				There is a possibility that the increase in taxi fares will have a negative impact on those who use them as a form of transport and may be on benefits or have limited funds.
Any other potentially affected groups (<i>please specify</i>)				N/A

Please list below an overall assessment of the impact of this proposal and how negative impacts can be minimise and positive ones maximised.

4. General assessment of impact on any group:	
a) Does the proposal knowingly prevent us in any way from meeting our statutory equality duties under the 2010 Equality Act?	<i>Yes/No</i>
b) What is the level of impact?	<i>High/Medium/Low</i>
c) Summarise the likely negative impacts:	Small increase in expenditure for those who rely on taxis as a means of transportation.
d) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance?	Ensure that residents know about the 'Call Connect' Service as an alternative to taxis.
e) Could you improve a positive impact of the Service or Function?	<i>N/A</i>
f) If there is no evidence that the Service or Function promotes equality of opportunity or improved relations, could it be adapted so that it does?	<i>N/A</i>

Now complete the action planning form, below, which will detail the changes that need to be made to this Service/policy/function to optimise compliance with our Equality Duty.

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Action identified	Key activity	How will we know this has been achieved? (measures, milestones and dates)	Officer responsible	Quarterly progress update
Ensure that residents know about the 'Call Connect' Service as an alternative to taxis.	Discuss with Communication Teams as to best approach.	Article in relevant publications.	Jenny Walker	

This completed document should be shared with your line manager and with Corporate Support. When completed, this Full EIA will need to be attached as an Appendix to your Committee Report. The 'Equalities Implications' section of the report will need to refer to the EIA in the Appendix and to ask for the EIA to be taken into consideration when a decision is being made.