



Chelmsford City Council Regulatory Committee

5th September 2024

CONSULTATION RE INCREASE IN TAXI (HACKNEY CARRIAGE) FARES – TARIFF.

Report by: Licensing Lead Officer - Daniel Winter

Officer Contact: Licensing Lead Officer Daniel.winter@chelmsford.gov.uk
01245606317

Purpose

To consider feedback from Private Hire Operators and other Local Councils about the petition that was received on the 24th May 2024 to assist members of the regulatory committee in their understanding of the implications of adding a 'Booking Fee'.

Recommendations

Members are requested to further consider the petition, and the feedback received and seeks agreement to allow for public consultation in accordance with the statutory requirements.

1. Background

- 1.1. Section 16 of the District of Chelmsford Byelaws, approved on January 22, 1975, established tariff charges for Hackney Carriage fares, with periodic reviews typically prompted by a licence holder's application, often via petition.
- 1.2. The Committee is aware of the statutory process for setting or varying Hackney Carriage fare tables.
- 1.3. Under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, councils must publish a notice in at least one local newspaper detailing the fare table or variation, allowing at least 14 days for objections. This notice must also be available at council offices for public inspection during reasonable hours.
- 1.4. If no objections are made within the specified period, or if objections are withdrawn, the fare table becomes effective after the notice period or upon withdrawal of objections whichever is later.
- 1.5. If objections are not withdrawn, the Council must consider them and set a new implementation date, not later than two months after the objection period ends, for the fare table with or without modifications.
- 1.6. Setting fares, also known as the tariff, involves the Council determining the rates or fares within the district. This includes charges for time and distance travelled, as well as any other charges related to the hire of a vehicle or the arrangements for hiring a vehicle
- 1.7. The tariff was last set with effect from 8th December 2022. A copy of the current Tariff is included at **Appendix A**.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 On the 24th May 2024 the Chelmsford Taxi Drivers Association (CTDA) proposes amending the current Hackney Carriage tariffs to include a 'Call-Out/Booking fee' of up to £30. The stated aim is to improve service levels, particularly for residents outside Chelmsford city centre, enhancing overall service efficiency and customer satisfaction. Members should note that Hackney Carriage Vehicles can legally be pre-booked as well as ply for hire. Full petition details are in **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 On the 11th July 2024 Members of the Regulatory Committee reviewed the petition and resolved that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee and officers be asked to gather more information on the specific areas of the proposal listed below;
 - How had the scheme been operated in Brentwood, its effectiveness and had there been any complaints?
 - The distance upon which the booking fee could be charged and where the tariff would actually apply to?

- 2.3 The licensing Authority sent out an email to all Chelmsford Private Hire Operators asking for feedback to the petition. A copy of the Questions asked are attached as **Appendix C**.
- 2.4 Responses from other local council's including Brentwood are attached to this report as **Appendix D**.
- 2.5 Response from Private Hire operator Happicabs as **Appendix E**
- 2.6 Response from Private Hire operator Fareways as **Appendix F**
- 2.7 As part of our inquiries, we consulted Andy Ashton, who has calibrated all our meters in the past and does so for other councils as well. His response is attached as **Appendix G**.

3. Implications

- 3.1 If the tariff change is agreed, the proposed table of fares will need to be advertised in the local paper for 14 days (from 12/09/2024 until 25/09/2024) and displayed in the Council offices and on the Council's website. It would also be the intention of officers to inform individual licence holders as part of this process.
- 3.2 Where there are no objections it is proposed that the changes take effect on 26/09/2024 subject to the production and distribution of the revised tariff card.
- 3.3 Where there are objections, the committee will need to consider the proposal further in the light of those representations, if following consideration, the tariff increase is approved it must come into effect not later than 26th November 2024

4. Options

- 4.1 Members may consider amending any part of this proposal and have the following options:
 - a) Support the proposed booking fee for Hackney Carriages as submitted and approve the changes for consultation and implemented in accordance with the proposed timescale where no objections are received.
 - b) Modify the proposed booking fee and approve the modified change for consultation and implemented in accordance with the proposed timescale where no objections are received.
 - c) Not to approve the proposed implementation of a booking fee to the current tariff.
- 4.2 In the event that an objection or representation is submitted after the consultation, the matter must be referred back to the Regulatory Committee for further consideration and where necessary, establish a further implementation date.

- 4.3 Committee members should be aware that if approved the new implementation date must be set within 2 months of the original date

List of appendices:

- A. Current Tariff
- B. CDTA Petition
- C. Questions to Chelmsford Private Hire Operators
- D. Other Council response
- E. Response from Happicabs
- F. Response from Fareways
- G. Pending a response from Andy Ashton.

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications:

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

The Petitioners

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

N/A

APPENDIX A

Chelmsford Hackney Carriage Fares 2022



Hackney Carriage Fares (YARDS) – UP TO 4 PASSENGERS

Tariff 1:

06:00 to 23:00 Monday to Saturday (excluding public holiday)

| | |
|--|-------|
| First 625 yards or 2 minutes and 34 seconds (pull off) | £3.60 |
| Each subsequent 71.0 yards. (Equates to £2.479 per mile after 625 yards) | £0.10 |
| Waiting time per 17.5 seconds | £0.10 |

Tariff 2

*23:00 to 06:00 daily and anytime on public holidays (all day) 18:00 to 22:00
Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve*

| | |
|---|-------|
| First 700 yards or 3 minutes and 15 seconds (pull off) | £4.80 |
| Each subsequent 50.7 yards (Equates to £3.471 per mile after 700 yards) | £0.10 |
| Waiting time per 14.10 seconds | £0.10 |

Tariff 3:

06:00 to 23:00 Sundays

| | |
|---|-------|
| First 410 yards or 1 minute and 17 seconds. (pull off) | £4.70 |
| Each subsequent 71.6 yards (Equates to £2.458 per mile after 410 yards) | £0.10 |
| Waiting time per 11.60seconds | £0.10 |

Tariff 4:

For hiring's begun between 22:00 24th December and 06:00 27th December and between 22:00 on 31st December and midnight on 1st January (no extras)

| | |
|--|-------|
| First 495 yards or 1 minutes and 56 seconds. (pull off) | £5.60 |
| Each subsequent 84.7 yards (Equates to £4.156per mile after 495 yards) | £0.20 |
| Waiting time per 19.8 seconds | £0.20 |

Miscellaneous extras:

| | |
|---|--------|
| For each additional passenger above one per journey | £0.30 |
| For items carried outside the passenger compartment | £0.20 |
| Each bicycle, push chair or perambulator | £0.20 |
| Each other parcel or item of luggage | £0.20 |
| Spoilage charge-a reasonable charge may be levied to a maximum of: | £65.00 |

Chelmsford Hackney Carriage Fares 2022



Hackney Carriage Fares (YARDS) – 5 OR MORE PASSENGERS (NOT APPLICABLE TO WHEELCHAIR USERS AND CARERS)

Tariff 5:

6:00 to 23:00 Monday to Saturday (excluding public holiday)

| | |
|--|-------|
| Time and yardage as above (pull off) | £5.40 |
| Each subsequent 71.0 yards ((Equates to £3.718 per mile after 625 yards) | £0.15 |
| Waiting time per 17.5 seconds | £0.15 |

Tariff 6:

*23:00 to 06:00 daily and anytime on public holidays (all day) 18:00 to 22:00
Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve*

| | |
|--|-------|
| Time and yardage as above (pull off) | £7.20 |
| Each subsequent 50.70 yards (Equates to £5.207 per mile after 700 yards) | £0.15 |
| Waiting time per 14.10 seconds | £0.15 |

Tariff 7:

06:00 to 23:00 Sundays

| | |
|---|-------|
| Time and yardage as above (pull off) | £7.05 |
| Each subsequent 71.6 yards (Equates to £3.687 per mile after 410 yards) | £0.15 |
| Waiting time per 11.60 seconds | £0.15 |

Tariff 8 :

For hiring's begun between 22:00 24th December and 06:00 27th December and between 22:00 on 31st December and midnight on 1st January (no extras)

| | |
|---|-------|
| Time and yardage as above (pull off) | £8.40 |
| Each subsequent 84.7 yards (Equates to £6.234 per mile after 495 yards) | £0.30 |
| Waiting time per 19.8 seconds | £0.30 |

Miscellaneous extras:

| | |
|---|--------|
| For each additional passenger above one per journey | £0.30 |
| For items carried outside the passenger compartment | £0.20 |
| Each bicycle, push chair or perambulator | £0.20 |
| Each other parcel or item of luggage | £0.20 |
| Spoilage charge-a reasonable charge may be levied to a maximum of: | £65.00 |

APPENDIX B

Hackney Carriage (Taxi) trade Tarif amendment proposal by Chelmsford Taxi Drivers Association (CTDA)

Proposal

To consider the current restrictions on Hackney Carriage (Taxis) affecting the service levels, which upon adjustment, could easily and greatly be enhanced for the benefit of members of the public.

Current Status

Drivers are currently hesitant to take booked (Telephone or App Booking) journeys outside the city center due to meter limitations, causing inconvenience for customers, especially wheelchair users.

The Association propose a solution similar to that introduced by Brentwood Council to instigate a 'Call-Out/Booking fee' initiative that could alleviate the problem.

This fee, quoted at telephone or App booking, allowing Taxi vehicles to efficiently serve distant locations, benefiting both customers and taxi businesses by reducing wait times without altering the final fare as shown on the meter.

The proposed approach provides transparency and control for customers, addressing the current challenges in the transportation system.

In detail

As you may be aware, Taxis vehicles have to run the meter for every job they undertake within the boundary of Chelmsford.

This makes perfect sense for all rank and flag down work in the City. Eg from the Station to Springfield. Private Hire (PH) firms are able to price trips at a price they deem fair for the job and in agreement with the customer at the time of booking.

Many Taxi vehicles can obtain work direct through their own phone or being sub contract from PH firms and undertake PH work as well as Taxi work. Primarily this occurs at peak times when the PH firm is very busy and wait times for customers increase that may be unacceptable to them. This for regular bookings and all wheelchair work.

The problem that is occurring is trips that do not start/finish or pass through the city centre where the Taxi vehicles are mainly based normally on Ranks.

For example. A resident in Great Waltham wanting to travel to Broomfield Hospital for an urgent requirement.

A PH firm would price that job at around £15 to account for the driver having to drive the 5+ mile trip to Great Waltham to drive just 2 miles back to the hospital. However, a Taxi driver would not be able to charge £15, he would have to meter the job at approximately £8.

This leads to the situation where Taxi drivers would not be given (or accept) these types of job received directly or from the PH firms. This means in peaks times the residents who need these type of trips (who may be happy to pay and would ultimately pay the £15 to the PH firms) have excessive wait times or not get there at all, as they do not have access to the overflow bank of Taxis waiting on Ranks in the city centre.

There are occasions when customers plead for taxis to come from the city centre, but the drivers are commercially unable, unwilling to take the job on.

Many a time customers will suggest they are willing to pay a premium to get to the destination/appointment that is urgent and or important.

This is particularly relevant to residents on the outskirts and the more rural parts of the Chelmsford district who need a taxi but aren't necessarily travelling to Chelmsford City Centre eg South Woodham Ferrers to Rettendon, Great Leighs to Boreham. The same can be said for areas closer to Town be it Galleywood to Gt Baddow, Springfield to Chelmer Village.

This situation, however, leads to a bigger problem for Chelmsford's disabled community who have special and at times urgent requirements.

As you know, the vast majority of wheelchair accessible vehicles in Chelmsford are Hackney Carriage - 100+ vehicles. In the scenario above where a wheelchair user from Great Waltham needs to get to the Hospital, they are now in the unenviable position of trying to find either a PH firm with a PH licensed Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (of which there are very, very few) so they can pay the £15 fare to the hospital, or they can try and find and persuade a Taxi vehicle to do the fare for £8.

This is not a good situation for these vulnerable customers, and it is causing a lot of problems for them.

There is however an easy solution. In Brentwood, they have solved the problem by allowing a 'Call Out/Booking fee' to be added to the fare booked with a Taxi. The price would be quoted to the customer at the time of booking and would be either accepted or not by the customer. Eg the fare on the meter would be approx £8 with £7 call out as a vehicle will come from the City Centre.

Should the customer not want to pay the fee that would be their choice, either choosing to wait for an available PH vehicle or finding their own way to their destination or choosing not to go at all.

This booking fee would allow PH firms with access to Taxi vehicles to provide the best possible taxi service they can, with reduced wait times. This is a win, win situation for all.

The call out fee does not change what the customer will ultimately pay – which will always be £15 in the above scenario.

By allowing the customer access to Taxi vehicles (that are waiting on ranks) will substantially reduce the waiting time, and in the case of Disabled customers, it enables them to have access to an actual vehicle that is capable of taking them. Without this proposed 'call out' charge, many including Disabled customers are being left unable to obtain much needed transport when they want it, at the price they are willing to pay dependant on their particular need. Urgent or important or both in some cases.

This gives the customer the control they need.

Rate card to read

'A Call Out/Booking Fee charge maybe applied on Telephone or App bookings dependant on location to the value no greater then £30 plus the metered fare'

Ian Vernon
Chelmsford Taxi Driver Association (CTDA)

Glen Stafford Independent Driver

APPENDIX C

Hello

I hope this message finds you well. This email is being sent to all Chelmsford Operators. We have already spoken to some of you however please assist us in providing a written response.

If this reaches you and you no longer operate an operator's licence, then please let us know so we can remove you from the list and close off your licence following its surrender.

Our Regulatory Committee considered a petition to our tariff last night. It was not agreed but put on hold with a request for more information specifically on how the bookings are managed and subcontracted to Hackney carriage drivers. To assist in this review, we are seeking your valuable insights on the following aspects:

How do you currently manage bookings that are subcontracted out to Hackney carriage drivers?

How is the radius/zone for these bookings determined, and what criteria are used?

What fees are associated with these subcontracted bookings?

How are jobs passed over to Hackney Carriages.

How do you work out your current fees for Private hire Bookings.

We would appreciate your feedback on how such a change to the tariff could impact your business. Specifically:

How would the introduction of a booking fee or call-out fee benefit your operations?

Are there any concerns or reasons why you might oppose this change to the tariff?

Your input is crucial in helping us understand the practical implications and potential benefits or drawbacks of this proposed change. We value your experience and perspective and look forward to your feedback.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

Kind Regards

Daniel Winter (MioL)

Licensing Lead Officer

APPENDIX D

Brentwood Council response

Hi Dan, this was included on the last tariff increase. which was requested by the trade (well 202020). It didn't really attract any comment from anyone members or other drivers. So went through without any concerns.

I'm not sure how well used it is. It was only requested as sometimes 202020 get bookings for the other side of the district which isn't very well served by any trade, and if they charge a booking fee to cover the travel there for their PHV's, and if they only had HC they wanted to be able to do the same as an extra.

Don't forget that under Gladden V Brentwood you don't need an Operators licence to operate HC's.

Here are the reports and the minutes.

[Agenda for Planning and Licensing Committee on Tuesday, 28th June, 2022, 7.00 pm | Brentwood Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[Agenda for Planning and Licensing Committee on Tuesday, 26th July, 2022, 7.00 pm | Brentwood Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

We have never had any complaints about it. Not sure how many actually use it.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Paul Adams | Licensing Manager

T: 01277 312503 | M: 07768 777100 | www.brentwood.gov.uk |

paul.adams@brentwood.gov.uk

Southend Response

Hi Dan

We have never been asked. It comes down to passenger awareness in my view, then the choice is theirs.

Regards,

Adam Penn, Regulatory Services Manager | Regeneration, Housing & Regulatory Services | Environment & Place | Southend-on-Sea City Council | Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 6ER

01702 534341 (Direct) | adampenn@southend.gov.uk | www.southend.gov.uk



Current Consultations

[Gambling Licencing Policy - Consultation 2024 | Your say Southend](#)

[Licensing Act 2003 Policy Document Consultation | Your say Southend](#)

Responses from Private Hire Operators

Happicabs

Hi Daniel

Thank you for your email. As per our call, I can clarify the following;

There are two requests we'd like to make

1. Booking Fee - also known as Admin Fee, Surcharge, Service Charge etc.

This is a fee that an operator charges in addition to the fare from the passenger to cover any administrative costs associated with handling a booking.

For example; we receive a call to handle a group booking to and from a local wedding venue. The costs incurred to manage a booking such as this are high due to time spent in pricing, booking and managing. We may charge a booking fee of £2 per booking in this example. Each booking will have its own booking fee in respective.

An operator may also add a standard booking fee for each booking they make. Happicabs currently charges a minimum of £0.80 per booking it makes via its telephone, app or web. This can increase up to £20 per booking depending on the customer requests, time and effort involved in managing the administrative part of the booking.

This is something that we currently cannot charge on bookings made and transferred to a HACKNEY CARRIAGE. These fees are removed and as a result loss incurred for the company.

We'd like the new tariff to incorporate a booking fee tariff maximum of £20 for PH operators making bookings and passing onto HC vehicle drivers.

2. Call out Charge also known as Dead Mileage charge or unpaid miles charge.

This is a fee that is charged when a vehicle drives a considerable amount of distance to pick-up the passenger and then drivers further away. Resulting in extra costs for the unpaid miles to reach the passengers pick-up point. This is what the Hackney Trade are requesting for so they can charge additional mileage to cover the costs for journeys that fall within the district but are considerably far away to get to. For example; if a journey was to be booked from Danbury to Danbury, Happicabs would charge (Fare+Dead Mileage). Our dead mileage is set to kick in once a pick-up and destination fall outside of 2.5 miles radius to Chelmsford Station. So, if a journey started from Boreham to Chelmsford City Centre, no dead miles will be charged or vice versa. If a journey was to start from Hatfield Peverel Station to Boreham, dead

mileage would be taken from either pick-up point or drop-off point (whichever is shortest) and the calculation will be taken from the edge of operating zone (2.5 miles) to the pick-up or drop-off point (whichever is shortest).

The problem we currently have is that we cannot pass these jobs onto hackneys as they're not allowed to do jobs that start and end in the district that incur a dead mileage fee. My example above starts from Braintree District however other examples cause issues such as a journey from and to Little Waltham to Great Waltham, is a considerable distance to travel from the city centre without a dead mileage charge.

How do you currently manage bookings that are subcontracted out to Hackney carriage drivers?

We manually dispatch booking to hackneys however we have to be mindful of booking fees and dead mileage charges. We have to avoid dead mileage charge jobs so hackneys remain complaint and we always remove booking fees so meter rate is only charge. This impacts service, availability and added work for our ops team.

How is the radius/zone for these bookings determined, and what criteria are used?

We set 2.5 miles radius as our operating zone from Chelmsford station.

What fees are associated with these subcontracted bookings?

Anything up to £20 in booking fees (see my booking fees section above please)

How are jobs passed over to Hackney Carriages.

By a computerised dispatch system.

How do you work out your current fees for Private hire Bookings.

This is explained above.

Thank you,

Waqas

Second Response from Happicabs

Hi Daniel,

I have given the call out/dead mileage part a further thought. I suggest there should be a operational zone where a dead mileage shall not be applied. The reasons for

this are to ensure tariff consistency and the public are given a fair price for the journeys they're looking to book. This shall also emit any potential complaints around pricing made by the public.

The suggestion is a zone 2.8 miles radius to Chelmsford Station should not permit any Hackney Carriage to add a dead mileage charge if the following conditions are met:

- Journey starts within the 2.8 miles radius zone *i.e. Journey starts in Springfield and ends in Hatfield Peverel (Springfield is within Operational Zone, dead mileage shall not apply).*
- Journey ends within the 2.8 miles radius zone *i.e. Journey ends in Danbury and starts in Great Baddow (Great Baddow is within Operational Zone, dead mileage shall not apply).*
- Journey starts and ends within the 2.8 miles radius *i.e. Journey starts in Great Baddow and ends in Meadgate (Both areas are within Operational Zone, dead mileage shall not apply).*
- Journey that starts and ends outside but goes through the 2.8 miles radius zone *i.e. Journey starts in Danbury and ends in Roxwell (Both areas are outside Operational Zone but you need to go through the zone to reach the other end, dead mileage shall not apply).*
- Journey starts and ends outside the 2.8 miles radius *i.e. Journey starts in Danbury and ends in Bicknacre, dead mileage is applied from the edge of the closest operational zone. In this case being Sandon.*

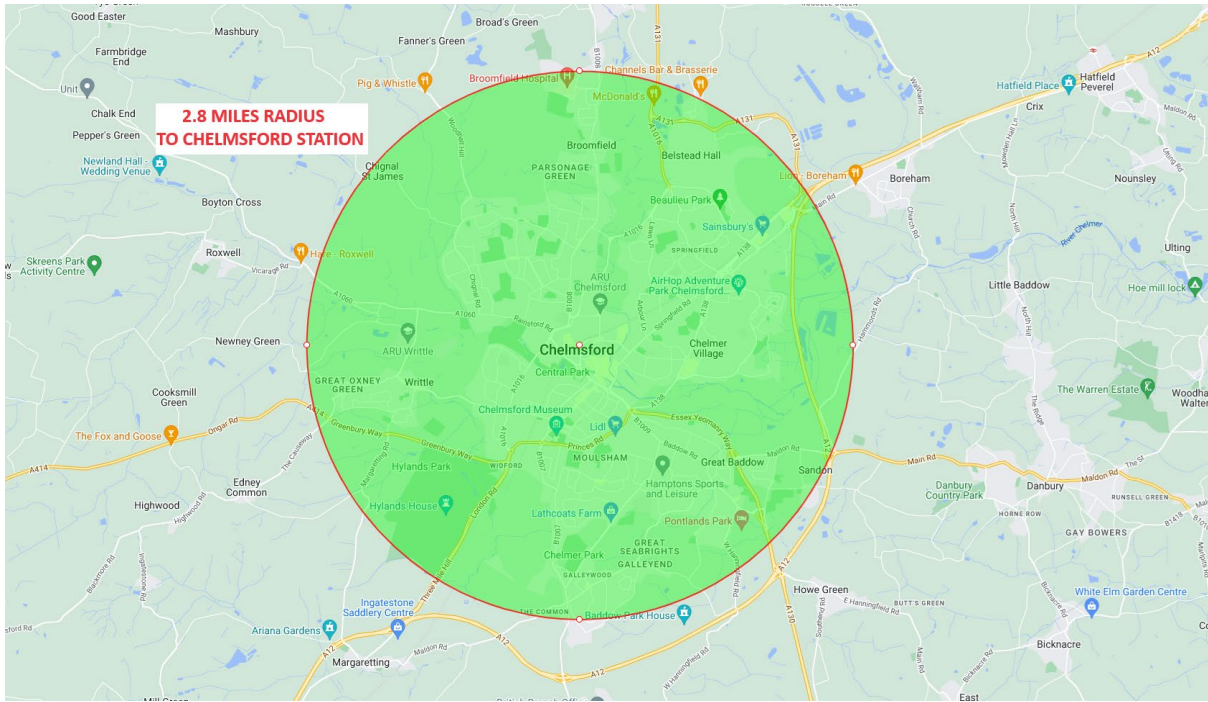


Figure 1 - 2.8 miles Radius to Chelmsford Station

Consider this as the operation or operating zone.

I do not agree with the customer being charged for a fee for a HCV to driver out of the City Centre to a local area i.e. Springfield for a pick-up and brought back to either the City Centre area **or** taken elsewhere either within or outside the operational zone. The current tariff is at one of the highest tariff cars in Essex, the tariff has tolerances for a fare not to exceed the tariff card within 2.8 miles within Chelmsford City Centre.

South Woodham Ferrers (SWF)

We must set boundaries for SWF too to ensure the area is protected in terms of taxi inflation costs. The same rules to apply with dead mileage charges within SWF operating zone.



Figure 2 - 1 mile Radius to South Woodham Ferrers Asda

The councillors may also want to consider a maximum cap on the dead mileage for the Chelmsford District. Maybe introduce a flat rate card that guides the drivers the maximum they can charge based on the area of pick-up or destination only if outside the zone. This will ensure consistency and should any pricing disputes arise, the city council licensing team have a guide to judge whether it was correctly charge or overcharged, and deal with it accordingly.

I strongly suggest this policy is introduced however it should come with a guide and boundaries to ensure the taxi trade are and remain to be governed by tariff rate card. The risk of not introducing an operational zone may lead to dead mileages being added to local fares that start and end within the area of operation (and as per my recommendation above as to where it should and should be applied.).

If you require any more information, please feel free to contact me or meet me in person at our office in Writtle.

Kind regards,

Waqas

APPENDIX F

Response from Fareways Taxis

Morning Daniel,

I hope you are well.

Our software is programmed to autodispatch jobs to drivers, it has no preference over a hackney or private hire. Jobs are offered to the closest driver in that area, if there is not one the system will then look further afield. Drivers can either accept or decline a job. Only jobs that are under £50, and only require a saloon car are dispatched this way, anything outside of this criteria is manually dispatched by an operator.

The areas on our dispatch system have been manually set up. For example, Springfield is broken down into multiple areas, Old Springfield, North Springfield, Springfield industrial estate. This ensures the closest driver is sent. If there is a booking from Sainsburys and there wasn't a driver in the aforementioned areas, the system would next look for a driver in Chelmer Village, Beaulieu, Channels estate etc. If a driver does not accept the booking it would go out for 'bid' and a driver from any area can take the booking.

We do not charge customers any fees on our jobs unless they are out of town and not coming back to Chelmsford, and that is only dead mileage.

Renters/owner drivers pay us 18% commission of a metered fare, this for both hackney and private hire. Drivers receive 100% of their tips.

Jobs are offered to drivers through an app which the drivers download onto their phone. The job shows the route of the journey and price before they accept it, if the driver does not want to do the job, they can reject it.

We do not charge fees for private hire bookings. The fare is calculated on a virtual meter, not too dissimilar to hackney meter, or a price is agreed at the time of booking. Hackneys use their council meter.

The benefits of a booking fee for us as a company is increasing the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles. We only have 2 of our own wavy and these are often fully booked. It is difficult to get a hackney to cover a job that is on the outskirts of Chelmsford and only going a mile i.e Waltham to Broomfield Hospital. I would hope that if a call out fee was introduced it would increase wheelchair availability over a weekend and peak times (rush hour). If a fee was introduced it would be helpful if we could be provided with phone numbers for wheelchair accessible vehicles and we could pass the job over to them, or give the passenger an alternative number to call.

The vehicles that Fareway own are all private hire, we operate drop and stop within Chelmsford. Drop and stop is providing passengers with quicker pick up times for asap bookings and also means we do not need to charge booking fees as there is usually a car in the area. A booking fee is not something we would implement for our own work, however we would use it for quoting wavy if they were being subcontracted outside of our circuit.

I think there would need to be a clear pricing structure and maximum fee that can be charged for each area. I also think it should be displayed or readily available in each vehicle to avoid abuse and customers being overcharged.

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Carly

Fareway Taxis

01245 355555

APPENDIX G

Andy Ashton Response

Good afternoon, Dan.

I can confirm that I do service and support Taxis that are licenced in Brentwood.

I was surprised that Brentwood Council had allowed a *variable* amount of up to £20.00 as this is clearly open to abuse in practice, whether it is displayed on a meter or not.

The very nature and purpose of a taximeter is to safeguard the public from being charged any more than the maximum permitted charge per mile/hour as defined by the Table of Fares (ToF).

The council (any LA) only has 'jurisdiction' within its own district boundaries. Therefore, any journeys undertaken from point to point within the licensed district cannot be charged any more than what is displayed upon the meter.

The wording, or similar found on many ToF's usually states:

"TAXIS MUST USE THE METER ON ALL JOURNEYS WHICH START AND END WITHIN (THE DISTRICT). The meter need not be used on journeys which terminate beyond (the district) boundary and or when the hirer and driver have agreed the price before the journey commences."

A Taxi accepting a private hire or pre- booking is still a Taxi when it comes to what it can charge when conducting business as outlined above. The driver, at his own discretion, can also give a discount to the fare shown on the meter.

As well as Brentwood and Chelmsford Councils, I also serve the following areas:

Harlow, Epping Forest, Uttlesford, Braintree, Basildon, East Herts, Broxbourne, Watford, Babergh, West Suffolk, Breckland, Fenland, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge wells and several others that travel to use me.

I am not aware that any other area listed above allows such a maximum booking fee, if any at all, to be displayed on their ToF.

I have however found you an example.

Basingstoke and Deane/ Hart District Council have set a fixed booking fee 'extra' of £1.25. (copy attached to this email).

In principle, a small 'fixed' booking fee to cover dead mileage and time might be appropriate if a Chelmsford City based cab firm accepted a local 'point to point job in let's say Boreham and had to travel several miles to do the job. It would be a discretionary charge but up to £20.00??

£20 will possibly buy enough diesel to cover the drivers entire shift and may be seen as excessive by some if applied in all instances where a driver had to travel a few miles to cover a pre-booked job.

As far as the programming of the Taximeter is concerned, extras are usually limited, in the case of Chelmsford, to £5.00 maximum, to cover most combinations as listed on the Chelmsford ToF.

In practice, many drivers in many areas do not charge extras and this alone adds unnecessary variations to different customers who are taken by different drivers. Some charge, some don't.

There is no special provision for a booking fee (of up to £20.00) on Brentwood taximeters. The wording of the ToF appears to allow for a mutual agreement to take place rather than for it to be displayed as an extra on the taximeter.

Extras in Brentwood are limited by the maximum number of passengers carried in a saloon or multi seater vehicle, for example, their only applicable extras that can be added on their meters is 40p per head for extra passengers in excess of one, up to the maximum of 7 (8 seater vehicles).

I hope the above information and any views I have shared, help with your decision making process.

Yours sincerely

Andy Ashton

A Ashton Ltd (Taximeters)