

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

7 April 2022

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 – Taxi Fare Review

Report by Head of Legal and Governance Services (22/70)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council is required to review the scales of fares for Taxis in this area at intervals of not more than 18 months. This report outlines the findings of the most recent review and proposes that there be an increase in fares.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In terms of Section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Council is required to set taxi fares and scales and keep these under review. The existing scale has not increased since 2011. The last review was concluded in January 2020.
- 1.2 The 1982 sets out the process to be followed when carrying out a review. That process was commenced in January 2022 which was later than planned. This was as a result of ongoing workload challenges within the licensing team as a result of covid 19, but also due to staff resources being diverted towards the processing of covid support grants for taxi drivers and taxi operators in Summer 2021, which was considered to a priority. In January 2022, all individual operators and organisations representing, or appearing to be, representative of the operators of taxis were consulted in relation to proposals for a fare increase. Since January 2022, staff resources have been diverted again to processing further, unexpected, round of covid support grants which has again unavoidably delayed the work on the review.
- 1.3 Ninety-nine operators with meters fitted in their vehicles were provided with four options to choose from; an increase of 5%, 7% or 10% or no increase. Two of those who responded wished the fares to be increased by 5%; three wished the fares to be increased by 7%; sixty eight wished an increase of 10% and two wished the tariffs to remain unchanged. There were 24 operators who did not respond.
- 1.4 As the Committee is aware, the Council operates 3 Tariffs. These provide for increasing rates from Tariff 1 to Tariff 3. Tariff 1 applies from 0630 hours until 2300 hours and for the first 880 yards of a journey with certain further provisos. Tariff 2 applies between 2300 hours and 0630 hours, again with provisos. Tariff 3 applies during the Christmas and New Year periods also with provisos.

- 1.5 As there has been no increase in the Tariffs since 2011 and with increased costs in fuel and associated running costs, it is proposed that the Licensing Committee consider increasing the Tariffs to take account of these ongoing costs.
- 1.6 Operators were asked for other comments and several operators expressed an interest that they wished the Taxi Fare Review process to be reformed in line with that of another Council which operates several tariffs, one of which allows operators to charge more for upwards of 5 passengers.
A comprehensive review of the Taxi Fare tariffs would require to be commissioned externally, with associated costs being met from operator fees. Officers will give further consideration to this proposal and engage further with operators and revert back to Committee with a further report in due course, should a comprehensive review be considered necessary.
- 1.7 A small number of operators made other suggestions including that tariffs be rounded up to the nearest 10 pence to save giving out small change; that the soiling charge be increased to £50.00 and that Tariff 2 commence earlier in the evening.
- 1.8 Before any new scale of fares and other charges can come into force the council must advertise any new proposed scale in the local press to give an opportunity for public representations. The notice must also specify the date on which it is proposed that the tariff shall take effect, which must take account of the period for representations and for appeals to the Traffic Commissioners. It is therefore suggested that the proposed date of coming into effect should be approximately 6 weeks after the date of advertising. Following the coming into effect of the tariff, all operators would be advised of the changes and the date on which the change comes into effect.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The majority of the Operators who responded to the consultation indicated a preference for an increase in the fares by 10% and it is proposed that the majority view be accepted.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the scale of fares be advertised in the local press and that interested parties are invited to respond within one month of the advertisement. Any responses would then be considered at the next available Licensing Committee meeting.
- 2.3 It is proposed that if no representations are received, the scale of fares and existing Tariffs are increased by 10%. This would remain in place until a further review is carried out within the next 18 months.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The consultation undertaken in relation to the review of taxi fares indicated that there is a strong preference to increase the scale of fares by 10%. It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Agrees that the current scale of fares be increased by 10% rounded up to the nearest 10 pence.
- (ii) Agrees that the scale of fares be advertised in the local press and that interested parties are invited to respond within one month of the advertisement and any responses be considered at the next available Licensing Committee meeting.
- (iii) Agrees that if no representations are received after advertising, the new scale of fees commence from a date specified by the Head of Legal and Governance Services in the advertisement, that date to be approximately six weeks after the date of the advertisement.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	None
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Increasing the current fare structure for the hire of Taxis and Private Hire vehicles will promote a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy by allowing affordable travel for members of the community. Equally it will support people to lead independent, healthy and active lives.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Offering an affordable travel option will promote an inclusive economy and support people to lead independent lives. It will give access to commercial and leisure venues throughout the region to the benefit of all.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Not applicable

Workforce

- 2.2 Not applicable

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) and are not considered to be relevant

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 Not applicable

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Not applicable

External

- 4.2 All Operators of Taxis, Private Hire vehicles and organisations appearing to be, or to be representative of, the operators of taxis were consulted.

5. Communication

Not applicable

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not applicable

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Scale of Taxi Fares and proposals sent to all metered operators.

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