

Report of Corporate Director for Place

To

Licensing Committee

On

3rd September 2015

Report prepared by: Sharon Whiston and Carl Robinson

Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

A Part I Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider an application from Southend Licensed Taxi Drivers Association for an increase in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle fares and charges and other associated amendments.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **To approve the revised fare chart set out at Appendix 3 subject to consideration of any objections to the statutory advertisement of the proposals.**
- 2.2 **That any changes to the fare and extra charges structure be duly advertised, implementing the public consultation process. Any objections will be heard and considered by the Licensing Committee.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is empowered to determine fares for Hackney Carriages. In addition, all those Private Hire vehicles which are equipped with a meter must also apply the same fares. Revision to the fares must be advertised before any revision comes into effect
- 3.2 There is no automatic entitlement for the trade to have a fare increase at any time. Any fare increase proposed is subject to approval by the district Council.

Part II of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that...*'A district council may fix the rates or fares within the district...'*

- 3.3 It has also been resolved that an annual review take place, to be implemented before Christmas each year. If no proposal is made by the Association by the end of August each year, the fare should remain unchanged until the following autumn.

- 3.4 The trade, via the SLTDA, proposed to the Licensing Committee on 21st October 2014 a new method of calculating any fare increase, based on its relative position in a national League Table of taxi fares. The league table is produced, updated and published monthly in the national Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication and records fares across all Licensing Authorities in the UK. While not being an official Government published League Table, it is widely acknowledged to be the definitive document for recording and comparing taxi fares. See **Appendix 4** for SLTDA letter. The Licensing Committee accepted the proposals and asked for any proposal to be brought back to committee for consideration of approval.
- 3.5 In June 2015, in accordance with the new methodology, a full written consultation was posted out to every licensed driver in the borough, for them to vote on which proposal they felt was best. The vote was counted by Council members and the Association on 3rd July 2015 and it was agreed that most members would like to add 20p to the face of the meter. See **Appendix 5**.
- 3.6 Night Charges/Unsocial Hours charges were introduced in 2003. The aim was to have a minimum fare of £5.00 shown on the meter from midnight (the then minimum fare of £2.20 plus the additional night charge from midnight to 4am of £2.80 = £5.00).
- 3.7 Although fare increases since then have seen the minimum charge rise above this figure, the Association has proposed that the £5.00 night charge fare remains at that rate, therefore the current minimum charge of £2.20p will reduce to £2.00, enabling the original £5.00 night rate to remain.
- 3.8 This night charge does not cover Christmas and New Year periods when separate charges are in place. For background Night Charge/Unsocial Hours, see **Appendix 6**.
- 3.9 The Association has proposed that for the Christmas and New Year periods the fare should remain double the proposed normal unsocial hours charge of £4.00. From midnight on 24 December until 6am on 27 December and from midnight on 31 December until 6am on 1 January, the meter will show £8.00 for the minimum charge, with no additional charge from midnight until 4am or until 6am Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays and no charge for extras.
- 3.10 Taking all the above into account, **Appendices 1, 2 and 3** show the proposed changes by the Association using the new formula and the current and proposed fare charts.

4. Corporate Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

None.

4.2 Contribution to Council's Vision and Critical Priorities

To maintain and improve transport availability within the Borough.

4.3 **Consultation**

All recommendations have been fully consulted with officers and interested parties.

4.4 **Equalities Impact Assessment**

No assessment necessary.

4.5 **Risk Assessment**

No risk assessment necessary.

4.6 **Community Safety Implications**

To maintain a Taxi and Hire Car service within the Borough and assisting with night time economy dispersal of persons leaving town centre.

4.7 **Environmental Impact**

Making transport available to impact on reduction of crime and disorder in the town centre.

5. **Background Papers**

5.1 Letter from Southend Taxi Drivers' Association.

5.2 Letter from Southend Police Divisional Commander.

5.3 Letter from Night Time Economy Forum.

6. **Appendices**

6.1 **Appendix 1** - Details of proposed fare increase.

6.2 **Appendix 2** - Current fare chart.

6.3 **Appendix 3** - Proposed fare chart.

6.4 **Appendix 4** - SLTDA letter.

6.5 **Appendix 5** - SLTDA fare tariff Poll

6.6 **Appendix 6** - Night Charge/Unsocial Hours