



Southend Licensed Taxi Driver Association

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Dear Mr Robinson

As discussed at our consultation meeting on the 25th March 2014, I am writing this proposal for a new formula to calculate future fares for the taxi trade in the Southend on sea borough.

We propose that the current pick up formula be replaced with this:-

In the Private hire and Taxi monthly magazine there is a table of all 377 boroughs of England's Taxi fares, these are collated by the National Private Hire Association, which are then published by the magazine.

As you can see from the tables attached, as of February this year we are currently 110th in the table.

Historically we have been as high as No 60 and past years have seen us languishing around the middle of the table, we feel that due to the geographical locality of our borough, especially in relation to London, we need to be back at No 60. This is due to factors which include the high cost of living in this area, the high running costs of maintenance, insurance, fuel and the price of car parts in the south of England.

If you care to benchmark our borough you will see that Rochford, Castle point, Brentwood & Chelmsford (at No 62) are all in front of us, with Thurrock, Braintree and Basildon a little way behind.

Where you are on the table is determined by how much your meter reads at the point of 2 miles, currently ours reads £6.00. This figure is the cost of the average taxi journey in England.

We feel that we don't want to go any higher than No 60, as this would be too high for the users of taxis in our borough.

We propose that we take the figure that at No 60, currently £6.20, and adjust our meters accordingly to reach that figure. This can be done by either adding the figure to the face of the meter, currently £2.80, making it £3.00, or reducing the yardage until the new figure is reached, or a combination of both.

Then we would not start the process again until we dropped below 100 in the table. The reason for this is that again historically the difference between 60 and 100 is approximately 20 pence, and it takes approximately 2 years to drop to No 100 from No 60

We would then have a full written consultation posted/emailed or conveyed over any other acceptable communication, out to every licensed driver in the borough, for them to vote on which proposal they felt was best, there will be 4 options given.

1. Add increase to the face of the meter.
2. Decrease the yardage until the 2 mile figure is reached.
3. A combination of 1. And 2. Until the 2 mile figure is reached.
4. No increase at this time.

Once the votes come back to the council, in a time limit of 28 days, the one that received the highest vote would be the proposal that we take forward.

Transparency

There are 5 aspects to a taxi meter due to the fact that it calculates time and distance.

1. The Face (currently at £2.80)
2. The Drop (currently at ¼ of a mile or 2 minutes, whichever comes first)
3. The Yardage (this has two aspects, the first amount of yardage currently at 20p for each 203.83 yards until a fare of £8.00 is shown on the meter, and 20p for each 152.93 yards from £8.00 onwards)
4. The Waiting time (this also has two aspects, currently at 20p for each additional 48 seconds after the drop, until £8.00 is shown on the meter and 20p for each additional 36 seconds thereafter.)
5. The Extras (40p for any luggage carried)

The only aspect of this meter that is transparent to the public as they commence their journey is what is on the face & the extras, unfortunately all other aspects of the meter cannot be shown until the journey continues or they get to their destination. So to be completely transparent at the start of a journey is not achievable.

We would like to reserve the right not to go as high as No 60 if we felt that the current economic climate did not warrant it.

We also would like to reserve the right to negotiate reductions or increases in the drop and or the extras and or the waiting time if we felt that these aspects need addressing.

We feel that this proposal is honest & fair, with complete consultation and transparency, it benchmarks other boroughs, and it takes into account geographical reasoning and leaves no room for ambiguity. It also removes any need for a holding basket, which has been a bone of contention recently; it also absolves the council and the association of having to negotiate fare increases year on year, and above all is fair to the public with no large and often increases.

The Southend Licensed Taxi Drivers association feel that we have always been reasonable in our negotiations with the council and hope that this proposal enhances our commitment in retaining a good relationship.

This process has been discussed with the Hackney Carriage Association, and it has been agreed that as long as there is full and complete consultation with the trade they will have no objections.

Yours sincerely

Mark Jennings (Secretary S.L.T.D.A.)

