

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Report of Deputy Chief Executive for Place
To
Licensing Committee
On
26th June 2019

Report prepared by: Elizabeth Georgeou Group Manager

**Agenda
Item No.**

Review of Hackney Carriage Fares and Charges
Chair Licensing Committee: Councillor Helen McDonald

A Part 1 Public Agenda item

1. Purpose of Report

For Members to consider the request from Southend Licensed Taxi Drivers Association to initiate a consultation with Southend on Sea Borough Council's licenced taxi and private hire drivers on options for an increase in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles fares and charges. (**Appendix 1**).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Authorise the consultation process to commence with Southend on Sea Borough Council's licenced taxi and private hire drivers on four options with respect to fares and charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

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 Council. The last time the fares were increased was in 2015 (**Appendix 2**)
- 3.3 Licensing Committee 21/10/14 Minute 308 resolved the circumstances when a fare increase would be proposed and the methodology to be applied to calculating the new fees and charges. It was agreed that the decision on whether to increase the fares and charges be based on Southend being around 60 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. As at June 2019 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council was rated jointly as between 101 and 128. (**Appendix 3**).

3.4 In line with the methodology referred to in 3.3 above there are four options being proposed to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's licenced trade.

1. No increase
2. 30 pence to be added to the face of the meter (currently £3.00) changing it to £3.30 with no change to the yardage.
3. 30 pence to be added to the yardage of the fare tariff (currently 203.83 & 152.93 yards respectively) changing the yardage to 186 and 142 yards respectively
4. 20 pence to be added to the face changing it to £3.20, and 10 pence to be added to the yardage, changing the yardage to 200 and 150 yards respectively.

The June 2019 Hackney Taxi Fare Tables indicate that these options will result in:

Option 2: £6.50 for the two mile fare with Southend on Sea Borough Council being in position 69 to 74 inclusive of the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication

Option 3&4: £6.40 for the two mile fare with Southend on Sea Borough Council being in position 75 to 90 inclusive of the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication.

3.5 The following other charges would also apply:

Night Charges / Unsocial Hours. These will change accordingly if options 2 to 4 are selected.

Christmas and New Year periods. These will change accordingly if options 2 to 4 are selected.

It is proposed that the Boxing Day rate remain at double the normal unsocial hours charge currently at £8.00 with 40 pence increments to stay that same from 0.00am to 06.00am. The normal unsocial hours charge will change accordingly if options 2 to 4 are selected.

The charge from 06.00am on 26th December to 6.00am on 27th December to be reduced to the day charge of £5.00 plus an additional £2.00 with 10 pence to the increments on the yardage. The normal day charge will change accordingly if options 2 to 4 are selected.

4. Corporate Implications

4.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

The Council's outcome delivery plan is to be connected and smart and intends to establish a joined up transport across the town. The provision of a viable taxi and hire car service is supported by the Council's transport strategy.

The availability of taxi and private hire services contributes to the feeling of safety for individuals, supporting access to services and the night time economy, enabling people to leave the area in a managed way.

4.2 Financial Implications

The cost of implementing any fare changes is contained within the licence fee.

4.3 Legal Implications

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 details the process for fixing of fares. Following the result of the consultation with the trade this process will be followed.

4.4 People Implications

None

4.5 Property Implications

None

4.6 Consultation

Following consideration by Committee it will be necessary to commence full consultation with the licenced drivers. The consultation period will be 6 weeks, followed by assessment of responses. The outcome of the consultation will be brought back to the Council for consideration and followed by any statutory consultation required.

4.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

To be completed following the full consultation and presented to Committee on the result of the consultation on the selected option.

4.8 Risk Assessment

If the provision of a taxi and private hire service is not viable for the drivers and operators there may be insufficient availability across the town.

4.9 Value for Money

The licence fees form part of the overall budget for the Council, however fee levels do not form part of this report. It is required that fees are set at a level which covers the cost of administering the system without making a profit.

4.10 Community Safety Implications

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

4.11 Environmental Impact

None

5. Background Papers

Licensing Committee 21/10/14 Minute 308

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Southend Licenced Taxi Drivers request for fare increase dated 9 January 2019 and subsequently amended 13th June 2019

Appendix 2: November 2015 Authorised Fares

Appendix 3: Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication and records fares across all Licensing Authorities in the UK. June 2019