

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Report of Deputy Chief Executive for Place
To**

Licensing Committee

On

17 October 2019

Report prepared by: Elizabeth Georgeou Group Manager
Regulatory Services

**Agenda
Item No.**

Review of Fares and Charges

Licensing Committee Chair: Councillor Helen MacDonald

A Part 1 Public Agenda item.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the results of the consultation with the Southend Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (SLTDA) for an increase in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle fares and charges and other associated amendments.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That any changes to the fare and extra charges structure be duly advertised, implementing the public consultation process. Any appeals will be heard by the Licensing Committee**
- 2.1 **To approve the revised fare chart set out at Appendix 1 subject to consideration of any objections to the statutory advertisement of the proposals 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 Members agreed at Licensing Committee on 21 October 2014 (Minute 308) that proposals for Hackney Carriage / Private Hire fare increases be considered at Licensing Committee. (Appendix 2)
- 3.3. The application for a fare increase proposed by the SLTDA reflected the agreed methodology, apart from changes to the Boxing Day tariff. (Appendix 3 & 4)
- 3.5 The Licensing Committee authorised the consultation with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council licenced taxi and private hire drivers on the options presented to the Licensing Committee on 26 June 2019 (Minute 101) (Appendix 5).
- 3.6 The consultation with Southend-on-Sea licensed taxi and private hire drivers took place between 6th August and 7th September (Appendix 6). The outcome of the consultation was that:
- 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

and

- the Boxing Day rate remains at double the normal unsocial hours charge currently at £8.00 with 40 pence increments to stay the same from 00.00am to 06.00am. The charge from 06.00 am on 26th December to 6.00 am on 27th December to be reduced to the day charge currently at £3.00 plus an additional £2.00 with 30 pence increments on the yardage.

The calculated increase of 30p on the yardage will result in an increase to approximately £6.50 for the two mile fare instead of £6.20. The meter increases in 20p increments so the charge to the customer would be either £6.40 or £6.60 depending if the journey is under or over 2 miles. This would put Southend on Sea Borough Council in position 69 to 74 inclusive of the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication published June 2019 (Appendix 7) in line with the methodology agreed with the SLTDA (Appendix 3).

There is no change to the day rate or the unsocial hours rate.

- 3.7** The last increase in fares was agreed in September 2015. Using the Bank of England tool for predicting inflation on goods and services it calculates the average inflation rate as being 2.9% a year. The increase proposed is lower when compared to this rate.

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 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 taxi and private hire service contributes to the Safe and Well outcome. The availability of these services across the town may improve the feeling of safety for individuals using the night time economy, enabling people to leave the area in a managed way. It also supports access to services for those who are unable to take public transport and are unable to drive.

4.2 Financial Implications

None, this is not a charge that Southend Borough applies to licensed drivers, this is the fare that drivers charge to customers.

4.3 Legal Implications

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 details the process for fixing of fares, which will be followed.

If no objections are made within the period specified in the notice, or if all objections made are withdrawn, the table of fares will come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date the last objection is withdrawn, whichever date is the later.

If objection/s are made within the period specified in the notice, and are not withdrawn a further date shall be set, which must be not later than 2 months after the first specified date, on which the fares come into force with or without modifications as decided by the Council after the Council has considered any objections.

4.4 People Implications

None

6.5 **Property Implications**

None

6.6 **Consultation**

All licensed drivers were written to inviting them to participate in the consultation, which was accessible through the Council consultation pages via a link to provided to them, and took place between 6th August and 7th September 2019. (Appendix 6) 129 drivers responded to the consultation. To ensure that only one vote was registered for each driver, voting drivers submitted badge numbers and checks were undertaken to ensure all those that voted were licensed drivers and therefore eligible to do so.

The four options, and question regarding the Boxing Day rate, agreed for consultation at the Licensing Committee on 26 June 2019 were put to the drivers.

The outcome is detailed in section 3.6 and illustrated in Appendix 6.

6.7 **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

An Equalities Assessment has been undertaken and will be reassessed if there are responses to the statutory consultation. There may be an adverse impact on those who use licenced taxi and private hire services because of the increase in cost. However, the increase in fares is lower than the rate of inflation and represents the first increase since 2015.

6.8 **Risk Assessment**

The increase in fares may deter users from using licenced taxi and private hire services. This is balanced against the increase being below inflation and supporting the viability of a licenced hackney carriage and private hire service.

6.9 **Value for Money**

Not applicable

6.10 **Community Safety Implications**

Providing a licenced taxi and private hire service supports safe egress from town centres.

6.11 **Environmental Impact**

None

7. **Background Papers**

None

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Revised Fare Chart

Appendix 2 - Licensing Committee on 21 October 2014 (Minute 308)

Appendix 3 - Application by SLTDA

Appendix 4 – SLTDA calculations for proposal

Appendix 5 - Licensing Committee 26 June 2019 (Minute 101)

Appendix 6 - Consultation results with licenced taxi and private hire drivers

Appendix 7 - Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication published June 2019