

**Meeting:** Licencing Committee  
**Date:** 7 July 2023  
**Classification:** Part 1  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Title of Report:** **Review of Fares and Charges**

**Executive Director:** Alan Richards (Interim Executive Director - Environment and Place)  
**Report Author:** Elizabeth Georgeou (Head of Regulatory Services)

## **1. Purpose of Report**

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

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 **That the changes to the fare chart structure be duly advertised, implementing the public consultation process.**
- 2.2 **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 Licencing Committee and to extend the temporary fuel surcharge until the change is implemented.**
- 2.3 **To return the proposed changes to the fare chart to the Licencing Committee for consideration where there are objections to the statutory advertisement.**

## **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 Licencing 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 <sup>1</sup>Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication. It records fares across all Licencing Authorities in the UK and whilst it is not an official Government published league table, it is widely acknowledged to be the definitive document for recording and comparing taxi

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)

fares. As of 7 June 2023, when the table was last published, Southend-on-Sea City Council was listed as between 171 and 198 in that table.

- 3.3 There is no automatic entitlement for the trade to have a fare increase at any time. Any fare increase proposed by them is subject to approval by the Council.
- 3.4 There was an emergency temporary increase agreed at Licensing Committee 23 March 2022 Minute 852 in response to the increase in fuel prices. This increase was agreed for a period of 1 year, or until an application was made by the trade for an increase.
- 3.5 An application for an increase was made to the Licensing Committee 17 October 2022 Minute 543, which was approved. This meant that the temporary increase that was detailed in 3.4 was removed.
- 3.6 The outcome of the increase was that the fares were set at £6.80 for the two-mile fare published in the March 2023 national Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication as between 168 to 196. This was still not within the parameters agreed by Committee detailed in 3.2. It should be noted that the temporary increase is not included in the figures displayed in the league tables.
- 3.7 The figures quoted for January and February 2023 in the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication were subject to a correction and did not accurately reflect Southend's position in that league table.
- 3.8 The trade requested that the Council further extend the temporary increase. This was because the members of the association had not anticipated that the temporary charge was going to be removed, when the options for the fare increase agreed in October 2022 was balloted. In response to this request the temporary increase was extended by the Licensing Committee on 16 January, Minute 875 and is due to expire at midnight on 2 August 2023.
- 3.9 The current application is in line with the methodology referred to in 3.2 above. There were four options proposed to Southend on Sea City Council's licenced trade.
  - £1 to be added to the face.
  - 50p to be added to the face and 50p on the yardage.
  - £1 on the yardage.
  - No increase.

This was put to the vote, and of the 202 drivers that voted 88% voted in favour of adding £1 to the face.

The calculated increase of £1 on the face will result in an increase to £7.60 for the two-mile fare instead of £6.80. This would put Southend on Sea City Council in position 73-82 inclusive in the national fare tables published in the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly publication June 2023.

- 3.10 The SLTDA also asked for a change to the 'day rate' and 'unsocial hours rate' waiting times listed on the fare chart as follows:
  - For the first waiting time increment, it is proposed to change the 48 seconds shown in the first 20p increase section of the fare chart from 48 seconds to 36 seconds.

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)

- For the second waiting time increment, it is proposed to change the 36 seconds shown in the second 20p increase section of the fare chart from 36 seconds to 28.8 seconds, and
- To introduce a third (new) waiting time of an additional 20p for each additional 24 seconds which will be chargeable on hirings from midnight until 4am, and from midnight until 6am Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, (except during Christmas and New Year periods when special rates apply)

This was put to a Yes / No vote and of the 202 drivers that voted 96% voted in favour of these increases.

The objective of this proposal is to assist the drivers in shortening the driving time, where passengers request additional stops. Shortening the driving time enables drivers to undertake more journeys, increasing the numbers of vehicles available at key times and enable passengers to leave the town more efficiently.

- 3.11 A further request was made to change the 'extras' from 40p to 50p, and to consider the introduction of a charge for carrying animals (except assistance animals).

Extras include such things as additional passengers beyond the first one, suitcases etc;

Again, there were four options proposed to Southend on Sea City Council's licenced trade.

- Increase all 40p charges to 50p and introduce a charge of £1 for any animal carried (except assistance animals)
- Keep all 40p charges at their current rate and introduce a charge of £1.20 for any animal carried (except assistance animals)
- Increase all 40p charges to 50p but DO NOT introduce a charge for any animal carried.
- Keep all 40p charges at their current rate and DO NOT introduce a charge for any animal carried.

Of the 202 driver responses 83% voted in favour of increasing all 40p charges to 50p and to the introduction of a charge of £1 for any animal carried (except assistance animals).

## **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 private hire car service supports the Council's transport strategy.

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

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)

#### 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, 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. This date must be no 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.

#### 4.5 **Property Implications**

None.

#### 4.6 **Consultation**

All licensed drivers were written to inviting them to participate in the consultation, which was accessed through the Council MySouthend portal via a link provided to them individually. It took place between 12 and 25 June 2023. (**Appendix 2**)

#### 4.7 **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 40p fuel surcharge will no longer apply.

#### 4.8 **Risk Assessment**

The increase in fares may deter users from using licenced taxi and private hire services. This is balanced against the increase supporting the viability of a licenced hackney carriage and private hire service. It is hoped that the new waiting time tariff, when coupled with the nighttime payment of £1, will encourage more drivers to work during the unsocial hours which service the City's nighttime economy.

#### 4.9 **Value for Money**

Not applicable.

#### 4.10 **Community Safety Implications**

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

#### 4.11 **Environmental Impact**

None.

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)

**5. Background Papers**

None.

**6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Revised Fare Chart

Appendix 2 - Consultation Response



**PROPOSED REVISED FARE**

**Authorised Fares**

**July 2023**

**Standard Rates**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| £4.00 | For the first ¼ mile or the first 2 minutes (or a combination of part of such distance or time)  |
| 20p   | For each additional 170 yards or 36 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) until a fare of £7.60 is shown on the taxi meter.   |
| 20p   | For each additional 134 yards or 28.8 seconds (or a combination of parts of such distance or time) when a fare of £9.80 is shown on the taxi meter.  |
| 20p   | For each additional 24 seconds which will be chargeable on hirings from midnight until 4am, and from midnight until 6am Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, except during Christmas and New Year periods. |

**NIGHT CHARGE/ UNSOCIAL HOURS**

For hirings begun between 9pm and midnight and 4am and 6am, also on Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays between 6am and midnight also between 6am and midnight on 1 January and 4am until 6am on 2 January, an additional:

£1.00

For hirings from midnight until 4am, and from midnight until 6am Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday, except during Christmas and New Year periods, an additional

£2.00

**CHRISTMAS CHARGES**

For hirings from midnight 24 December to 6am 26 December (double the day and unsocial hours rate)

£10.00

For hirings on Boxing Day from 6am to 6am on 27 December (plus an additional 10p on the Standard Yard Rate:

£5.00

**NEW YEAR CHARGES (AN ADDITIONAL)**

For hirings from midnight 31 December to 6am 1 January (double standard rates and unsocial hours rate)

£10.00

**Extra Charges**

**1. LUGGAGE**

For any luggage carried. No charge for disabled persons wheelchairs, disability aids or any assistance animals transported in the vehicle.

(Luggage is intended as hand luggage, shopping bags, suitcases etc. The driver reserves the right to negotiate an additional charge for larger items up to a maximum of £10.00)

50p  
(Max Charge)

**2. ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS**

For each person in excess of one

50p

**3. ANIMAL CHARGE**

A single charge for animals carried in the vehicle THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

£1.00

**LOST PROPERTY**

Specific requests for the delivery of property left in taxis must be paid for at the metered fare.

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)





### Consultation Options and Outcome of the Vote

#### 1. Proposed Fare Increase

|  | <b>Total</b> |
|--|--------------|
| £1 to be added to the face                         | 178          |
| 50p to be added to the face and 50p on the yardage | 16           |
| £1 on the yardage                                  | 5            |
| No increase  | 3            |

#### 2. Waiting Times:

In addition, amendments to the waiting time were proposed as follows:-

- For the first waiting time increment, it is proposed to change the 48 seconds shown in the first 20p increase section of the fare chart from 48 seconds to 36 seconds.
- For the second waiting time increment, it is proposed to change the 36 seconds shown in the second 20p increase section of the fare chart from 36 seconds to 28.8 seconds, and
- To introduce a third waiting time of an additional 20p for each additional 24 seconds which will be chargeable on hirings from midnight until 4am, and from midnight until 6am Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, except during Christmas and New Year periods.

The outcome of the vote was as follows:-

|                         | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Yes to proposed changes | 194          |
| No, to proposed changes | 8            |

#### 3. Extras

Drivers were given the following 4 options:

- Increase all 40p charges to 50p and introduce a charge of £1 for any animal carried (except assistance animals)
- Keep all 40p charges at their current rate and introduce a charge of £1.20 for any animal carried (except assistance animals)
- Increase all 40p charges to 50p but DO NOT introduce a charge for any animal carried.
- Keep all 40p charges at their current rate and DO NOT introduce a charge for any animal carried

The outcome of the vote was as follows:

|   | <b>Total</b> |
|---|--------------|
| 40p to 50p plus £1 animal charge (except assistance animals)                                    | 167          |
| Keep 40p plus £1.20 animal charge (except assistance animals)                                   | 6            |
| 40p to 50p but do not introduce a charge for any animal carried                                 | 14           |
| Keep all 40p charges at their current rate and do not introduce a charge for any animal carried | 15           |

<sup>1</sup> [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Publication](#)

