

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Planning and Development	Licensing and Public Safety Committee	Tuesday, 6 September 2022

Request for Taxi Tariff Increase

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. To inform members of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee, about a request from the taxi drivers of South Ribble for a tariff increase.

Recommendations

2. To note the contents of the report.
3. To consider the proposed request for an increase in the Taxi tariff set by this licensing authority
4. To agree that the licensing section undertake a consultation exercise with stakeholders
5. on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
6. To agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation exercise at a future meeting.

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

Background to the report

8. The total cost of using a taxi is referred to as a 'fare' and is calculated on an electronic meter installed and displayed within the vehicle.
9. The council sets the maximum fares that taxi drivers can charge its passengers. The main charge is for the distance i.e. the further you go, the higher the fare, with a startup fee that is set before the vehicle commences its journey.
10. There are extra charges for delays, when there are higher numbers of passengers and costs are also multiplied during evenings, weekends and public holidays, depending on timings within the tariff card. Section 65 of the of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits Licensing Authorities to set the fares tariff for its licenced Hackney carriages (taxis).
11. The last tariff increase was agreed by this Committee in 2015. A copy of the existing tariff table is found at background document 1 of this report.
12. Hackney Carriage drivers must always have the tariff card on display so that that passengers know what the charges are, before the journey commences.
13. All the separate charges are shown in a 'tariff'. The driver of a taxi cannot charge more than the tariff but can charge less if they wish.
14. To fix the schedule of fares, a written request is normally submitted to the council, usually by the hackney carriage associations.
15. The council is obliged under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, to advertise for a period of 28 days any variation to an approved table of fares. Any objections to the proposal must be considered before new tariffs are brought into force.
16. Once a fare increase has been approved, the council is required to ensure all licensed hackney carriage vehicles have meters which show the new tariffs, and to ensure that meters are checked and sealed, and that there are clear fare cards for each vehicle. This is to ensure that members of the public are not overcharged for their journey, and that there is a clear explanation about the fare change or increase.

Request to Increase the Tariff of charges

17. A written request has been received from the "South Ribble Taxi Drivers Association", for an increase in the tariff of charges set by this authority.
18. This request can be found in the form of a letter from South Ribble Taxi Drivers association attached to the report as appendix 1.
19. The letter requests the following increases to its tariff,
 - Increase on start-up fee by 50p, charge per mile to stay the same.
 - a. Tariff 1 - £2.70.
 - b. Tariff 2 - £3.50

c. Tariff 3 - £4.50.

- Soiling charge is currently £40.00 increase to £100.00 maximum.
- Waiting time increase from 10p every 30 seconds to 10p every 20
- The additional charge for carrying dogs (excluding assistance dogs), Increase from 60p per dog to £1.00.

Factors to take into account

20. Various factors have been mentioned by the trade as to why they feel now is a reasonable time to increase the tariffs set by this authority;

- Cost of living increases since 2015
- Cost of fuel increase
- Second hand vehicle cost increases
- Covid lockdown impact on drivers
- Lack of work during Covid
- Lack of grants for licenced drivers
- Minimum wage increases

Where does the current fare charge sit?

21. Nationally, South Ribble Borough Council currently sit 236 least expensive out 359 councils recorded in the table of most expensive fares within the country. These figures are based on a cost of a 2-mile journey on the lowest tariff.

22. A link to the current nation table of fares can be found attached to this report as appendix 2, or by following link - <https://www.phtm.co.uk/newspaper/taxi-fares-league-tables>

1. Blackburn - £6.30
2. Fylde £6.10
3. Preston - £6.00
4. Blackpool £6.00
5. Lancaster £5.80
- 6. SOUTH RIBBLE £5.80**
7. Wyre £5.80
8. Ribble valley - £5.30
9. Bolton - £5.20
10. Chorley £5.10

23. Members are asked, should they agree to a consultation exercise that will take place for 4 weeks.

24. A report with the findings of the consultation will presented at the next meeting of The Licensing and Public Safety Committee for a decision to take the report to the next meeting of the full council for formal adoption.

Climate change and air quality

25. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

26. While these charges are set by South Ribble Council we do not make the charges directly so there are no budgetary implications.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

27. It is the council's role to set the tariff for hackney carriages in their borough. Periodically these tariffs are reviewed. Here a local Taxi Driver's Association has requested some changes. The report explains the procedure that must be followed if any changes are to be made. Essentially the decision for Committee to make at this stage is whether they wish to go out to consultation to ascertain the views of the wider public as to the proposed changes. No changes can be made without such a consultation exercise.

Background documents

Background document 1 - Current Tariff card

Appendices

Appendix 1 Letter from Trade requesting increase.

Appendix 2 A link to the current nation table - <https://www.phtm.co.uk/newspaper/taxi-fares-league-tables>

Appendix 3 – Proposed tariff card following increases

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