

Agenda Item	7
Report No	HLC/078/13

Review of Taxi Tariff 2014

Report by the Legal Manager

Summary

This Report advises the Committee of the process which requires to be followed in respect of reviewing the current taxi fare scales which came into effect on 21 January 2013.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council has a statutory duty, in terms of Section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 to review its scales for the fares and other taxi related charges every 18 months (The review requires to be fully completed within this period). A note of the current fare scales are attached in Appendix 1.

1.2 When reviewing the tariff in previous years, the Council took account of variations in petrol costs, insurance premiums and the capital costs of vehicles. The following changes indicate the variations made to the tariff in previous reviews:

2002/03 - Tariff increased by 10%

2004/05 - Tariff increased by 5%.

2006/07 - No % increase however the flag fall, which is the initial amount on the meter, was increased by 50p for all tariffs, in other words the drivers received an extra 50p for every journey they undertook.

2008/09 - Yardage for the initial flag fall and subsequent flag drops was decreased by 14% which had the effect of a 3% to 14% increase in fares over an increasing distance.

2009/10 – No increase in tariffs or flag fall. Tariff 2 extended to apply from 10.00pm on Fridays to 7.00am on Mondays. Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day now permitted to be charged as Tariff 2.

2011/12 - Yardages for Tariffs 1 and 2 increased by 5% and 3% respectively, Tariff 3 permitted to be charged for vehicles carrying 5 passengers or more all day on Saturdays and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day.

2013/14 – Amended start time for Tariff 2 from 10.00pm to 9.00pm.

1.3 The purpose in commencing the review now is to enable any changes to be implemented by July 2014.

1.4 Section 17 of the abovementioned Act states that before the Licensing Authority fixes any scales or carries out any review it shall:

a) consult with persons or organisations appearing to them to be representative of the operators of taxis operating within their area.

b) give notice of their intention by advertisement in a newspaper circulating in their area stating:

(i) the general effect of the proposals and the date when they propose that their decision will take effect; and

(ii) that any person may lodge representations in writing with respect to the proposals within a period of one month after the date of the first publication of the notice; and consider any such representations duly lodged with them.

1.5 It is therefore suggested that as a first step the Council consults the Taxi Trade Associations across the Highlands in early December 2013. The results of the consultations, together with any factors which may be relevant, could be reported to the Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2014 when Members would be invited to agree a draft tariff for consultation.

2.0 Formal Consultation

2.1 Thereafter, formal consultation would take place in accordance with the legislation.

2.2 The Council would give Public Notice of its intention to carry out a review in a newspaper circulating in the Area stating:

(i) the general effect of the proposals and when they will take effect; and

(ii) that representations can be lodged within one month of the date of the first publication of the notice; and

(iii) consider any representations duly received.

2.3 Any representations received could be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 4 April 2014 and thereafter members would be invited to agree the final tariff.

2.4 Any revised fare scale would then be able to come into effect at the end of May 2014, subject to no appeal to the Traffic Commission being made by the trade. This would allow sufficient time for operators to make arrangements with their meter suppliers if required.

2.5 In the event that there is a change to the tariff which require the taxi meters to be recalibrated the Trading Standards Service will require to test and re-seal all taxi meters once they have undergone re-calibration.

3.0 Resource Implications

The proposals contained in this report do have resource implications for both Chief Executives Service and TEC Services. However, the costs involved will be recovered through the fee charges levied on taxi operators.

4.0 Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider commencing the review of the current fare scales for taxis on the basis detailed in this report, and to give any preliminary views on the fare review.

Designation: Legal Manager

Officer Reference: Michael Elsey

Date: 7 October 2013

Background Papers: Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982

Appendix 1 – Copy of Current taxi tariff

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

TAXI FARES

With effect from midnight on 21st January 2013, the maximum fares will be as follows:-

Tariff 1;

- For the first 785 yards or part £ 2.50
- For each additional 130 yards or part .10p

General effect – the price of a hire £3.30 for the first mile plus £1.40p per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 2; applies on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day and between **9.00pm and 7.00 a.m. on any day**, all day on Saturday and Sunday **and when 5 or more** passengers are being carried **at any time** of any day or night, for example, by a “London” style taxi or by a “people carrier” or by a minibus, except where Tariff 3 applies.

- For the first 560 yards or part £ 3.00
- For each additional 92 yards or part £ .10p

General effect – the price of a hire £4.40 for the first mile plus £1.90 per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 3; applies on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day and 2nd January. It also applies when 5 or more passengers are being carried between **9.00pm and 7.00am**, all day on Saturday and Sunday and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day for example, by a “London” style taxi or by a “people carrier” or by a minibus.

- For the first 444 yards or part £ 3.60
- For each additional 74 yards or part .10p

General effect – the price of a hire £5.40 for the first mile plus £2.40 per mile thereafter plus extras*

*Extra Charges

- Waiting time for first 2 minutes .10p
- For each additional period of 20 seconds or part thereafter .10p
- Booking ahead e.g. by telephone .50p
- Any bridge tolls or ferry charges, where applicable.

In addition, provision has been made for a supplementary booking charge of up to a maximum of £6.50 to compensate for the cost of the outward journey for hires which commence 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is the nearer) and the customer wishes to travel further away. This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of booking.

When a taxi (or a private hire car fitted with a taxi meter) is called but not used, a charge shall be allowed as if it had been occupied from the time it left the stance or garage.

Soiling Charge – maximum of £60.00 payable by an offending passenger, where a vehicle requires to be removed from service for cleaning in order for it to be restored to a usable state and condition.