

Agenda item	<b>6.</b>
Report no	<b>HLC/052/24</b>

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** THE HIGHLAND LICENSING COMMITTEE

**Date:** 25 June 2024

**Report title:** Review of taxi tariff 2024/25

**Report by:** The Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services

**1. Purpose/Executive summary**

- 1.1** This report provides the Committee with details of the responses received following public advertisement of the proposed revised scale of the maximum fares that can be charged by taxis and private hire cars fitted with taxi meters.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1** The Committee are invited to:

(i) consider the representations received following advertisement of the proposed tariff, all other further information before it and any submission which any taxi operator attending the meeting may make to the Committee at the meeting and thereafter agree a final tariff,

(ii) agree that any revised tariff will take effect from 13 August 2024, subject to any appeal being lodged as per 7.2 of the report and the caveats set out as per 8.1 of the report.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1** At the meeting of the Highland Licensing Committee held on 7 May 2024, Members undertook a review of the current scale of maximum fares and charges for taxis and private hire cars fitted with taxi meters. The Committee agreed that no change be made to the existing tariff. The only change to the supplementary booking charges agreed to was to remove the reference to “3 miles.”

A copy of the current tariff is attached as **Appendix 1**.

A copy of the proposed tariff, as agreed by the Committee on 7 May 2024, is attached as **Appendix 2**.

In accordance with the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the proposed scale was advertised and responses requested to be submitted to the Council by 7 June 2024.

### **4.0 Consultation response**

- 4.1** The proposed scale was published by Council press release and in the Press and Journal (Highland edition) on 9 May 2024 and on the licensing page of the Council’s website. Members of the public were invited to submit their comments on the proposals by 7 June 2024. Section 17(4B) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 states that a licensing authority must allow at least one month after the first publication by the authority of the proposed scales for representations in writing. A copy of the timetable, which was included with the 7 May 2024 report is attached as **Appendix 3** to this report.

- 4.2** No representations were received from the public following publication of the abovementioned application.

- 4.3** A summary of the view expressed by the trade at the informal consultation meetings held during the week of 4 March 2024 are attached as **appendix 4** to the report.

### **5 Further Considerations**

- 5.2** In light of The Scottish Government’s Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities guidance, the Committee were invited to consider figures supplied by the Government’s Office of National Statistics (ONS) at their meeting of 7 May 2024.

- 5.3** The main index is the Consumer Price Index which is a measure of consumer price inflation produced to international standards. However, figures are also provided for other statistics which may be relevant for taxi operators.

- 5.4** A comparison was provided between figures that were considered at the meeting of the Highland Licensing Committee on 29 November 2022 (at the last review of the taxi tariff) with the most up to date figures available for the 7 May 2024 meeting. A copy of these are re-attached as **Appendix 5** to this report for reference.

## **6.0 Implications**

- 6.1** The costs to the Council associated with the review of the taxi tariff in terms of outlays will be advertising costs only together with the staff time costs associated with the process. The Traffic Commissioner's costs in determining any appeal following adoption of a final tariff will also be borne by the Council, irrespective of the outcome of any such appeal.
- 6.2** The fee charged by the Trading Standards Service in relation to the checking and sealing of taxi meters requires to be met by operators. The cost for this, (excluding any new chip required from the meter manufacturer) is currently £83.50 (£69.90+VAT).

## **7.0 Implementation**

- 7.1** The next step in this process will be for the Committee to consider the representations received, all other information before it and any further submissions which any taxi operator attending the meeting may make to the Committee at the meeting and thereafter agree a final tariff. In accordance with the 1982 Act, a letter will be sent to all taxi operators advising them of the outcome and of their right of appeal to the Traffic Commissioner within 14 days of notice being given to them of the Committee's decision. If no appeal is lodged an advert will be inserted in a local paper informing the public of the new tariff and its commencement date.
- 7.2** Should an appeal be submitted to the Traffic Commissioner this will have the effect of suspending the decision of the Council and the tariff will effectively be on hold, with the original tariff remaining in operation meantime.

## **8.0 Implementation date**

- 8.1** It is suggested that the implementation date be 13 August 2024. This is to ensure that the advert which requires to be placed in the press (at least 7 days prior to the tariff coming into effect) can be done following confirmation of no appeal (if this is the case). If there are amendments to any of the tariffs it will also afford the taxi operators time in which to arrange for their meters to be recalibrated, if required. It will also give Trading Standards officers time to mark out and set up revised test tracks in the various areas of the Council and it will also ensure that there are sufficient Trading Standards officers available to carry out the meter testing as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Date: 10 June 2024

Author: Iain Meredith

Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Copy of current tariff  
Appendix 2 – Copy of the draft tariff agreed by HLC on 7/5/24  
Appendix 3 – Representations received  
Appendix 4 – Timetable for implementation of the taxi tariff  
Appendix 5 – Comparison of tariffs



**Current scales – with effect from 13 February 2023**

**Tariff 1 (applies to vehicles carrying 4 passengers, except when a higher tariff applies)**

Flagfall (first 785 yds)	£3.70
Mileage	£2.20
<b>Examples</b>	
1 mile journey	£4.90
2 mile journey	£5.90
3 mile journey	£8.10
4 mile journey	£10.30
5 mile journey	£12.50
6 mile journey	£14.70
7 mile journey	£16.90
8 mile journey	£19.10
9 mile journey	£21.30
10 mile journey	£23.50

**Tariff 2 (applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers on Good Friday, Easter Monday or May Day and, except when a higher tariff applies, between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am on any day and all day on Saturday and Sunday. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, it also applies at any time of any day or night, except where a higher tariff applies.)**

Flagfall (first 560 yards)	£4.00
Mileage	£2.70
<b>Examples:</b>	
1 mile journey	£5.90
2 mile journey	£8.60
3 mile journey	£11.30
4 mile journey	£14.00
5 mile journey	£16.70
6 mile journey	£19.40
7 mile journey	£22.10
8 mile journey	£24.80
9 mile journey	£27.50
10 mile journey	£30.20

**Tariff 3 (applies between 6.00 am and midnight on both Boxing Day and 2nd January. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, and except where Tariff 5 applies, it also applies between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am, all day on Saturday and Sunday and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day.)**

Flagfall (first 444 yards)	£4.70
Mileage	£3.30
<b>Examples:</b>	
1 mile journey	£7.20
2 mile journey	£10.50
3 mile journey	£13.80
4 mile journey	£17.10
5 mile journey	£20.40
6 mile journey	£23.70
7 mile journey	£27.00
8 mile journey	£30.30
9 mile journey	£33.60
10 mile journey	£36.90

**Tariff 4 (applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers at any time between 6.00 pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00 am on Boxing Day and between 6.00 pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00 am on 2 January.)**

Flagfall (first 444 yards)	£4.70
Mileage	£4.30
<b>Examples:</b>	
1 mile journey	£8.00
2 mile journey	£12.30
3 mile journey	£16.60
4 mile journey	£20.90
5 mile journey	£25.20
6 mile journey	£29.50
7 mile journey	£33.80
8 mile journey	£38.10
9 mile journey	£42.40
10 mile journey	£46.70

**Tariff 5 (applies to vehicles carrying 5 or more passengers at any time between 6.00 pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00 am on Boxing Day and between 6.00 pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00 am on 2 January.)**

Flagfall (first 444 yards)	£4.70
Mileage	£5.50
<b>Examples:</b>	
1 mile journey	£8.90
2 mile journey	£14.40
3 mile journey	£19.90
4 mile journey	£25.40
5 mile journey	£30.90
6 mile journey	£36.40
7 mile journey	£41.90
8 mile journey	£47.40
9 mile journey	£52.90
10 mile journey	£58.40

### **Waiting Time:**

#### **Tariff 1**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £3.70

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

#### **Tariff 2**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £4.00

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

#### **Tariff 3**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £4.70

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

#### **Tariff 4**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £4.70

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

#### **Tariff 5**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £4.70

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

**Please note that there was no increase to the waiting time at the last tariff review.**

**Extra charges:**

Booking ahead i.e. by telephone	<b>£1.00</b>
Soiling charge	<b>£150.00 maximum</b>
Any bridge tolls or ferry charges, where applicable	<b>Actual cost</b>
Any airport car parking charges	<b>Actual cost (only chargeable on production of a receipt to the hirer)</b>
Supplementary booking charge for outward journey which commence 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is the nearer)	<b>Actual cost at the tariff which applies at the time of travelling between the starting location of the taxi or the location of the taxi base (as the case may be) and the pick up point or drop off point, whichever is the closer to the taxi or taxi base.</b>  <b>(This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of the booking.)</b>
Luggage Charge – A maximum charge of £5.00 be introduced for the carriage of bulky items which cannot be reasonably accommodated in the boot of the vehicle being hired. This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of booking. For the avoidance of any doubt, this will not apply to any items designed to assist the mobility of users such as wheelchairs or walking aids.	<b>£5.00 maximum</b>
Called but not used	<b>Charge will be the amount as if it had been occupied from the time it left the stance or garage.</b>

**Proposed scales – with effect from 13 August  
2024**

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#### **Tariff 5**

Initial period of 119 seconds - £4.70

Each additional 14 seconds - £0.10

**Please note that there was no increase to the waiting time at the last tariff review.**

**Extra charges:**

Booking ahead i.e. by telephone	<b>£1.00</b>
Soiling charge	<b>£150.00 maximum</b>
Any bridge tolls or ferry charges, where applicable	<b>Actual cost</b>
Any airport car parking charges	<b>Actual cost (only chargeable on production of a receipt to the hirer)</b>
Supplementary booking charge for outward journey	<b>Actual cost at the tariff which applies at the time of travelling between the starting location of the taxi or the location of the taxi base (as the case may be) and the pick up point or drop off point, whichever is the closer to the taxi or taxi base.</b>  <b>(This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of the booking.)</b>
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Called but not used	<b>Charge will be the amount as if it had been occupied from the time it left the stance or garage.</b>

### Timetable for implementation of the taxi tariff

Current taxi tariff start date – 13/02/23

Review to be completed by 13/08/24

Action	Timetable 2024
The Council to consult/meet with persons or organisations appearing to be representative of operators of taxis within its area.	Early to mid March 2024
The Highland Licensing Committee will consider the representations received and agree a draft tariff.	HLC – 7 May 2024
The draft tariff will be publicised in the P&J (Highland Edition) and on the Council's website inviting the public to submit comments/representations in relation to the draft tariff within 28 days.	To be advertised no later than 9 May 2024
Deadline for submissions.	7 June 2024
The Highland Licensing Committee will meet to consider the results of the public consultation, and agree a final tariff.	HLC – 25 June 2024
Any revised fare scale would then come into effect, subject to no appeal to the Traffic Commission being made by the trade.	Beginning of August 2024

## SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS (BY AREA)

## TAXI/PHC SUBGROUP MEETING INVERNESS

MONDAY 04 MARCH 2024

1.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Sean Kennedy – HLC Chair</li> <li>• Dr Christopher Birt – HLC Member</li> <li>• Cllr Jackie Hendry – HLC Member</li> <li>• Sgt Sarah Paterson (Teams) – Police Scotland</li> <li>• Mark McGinty – THC Trading Standards</li> <li>• Iain Meredith – HLC (Licensing) Acting Principal Solicitor</li> <li>• Maureen Duffy – HLC (Licensing) Solicitor</li> <li>• Michael Elsey – HLC (Licensing) Senior Licensing Officer</li> <li>• Kata Somogyi – HLC (Licensing) Administrative Assistant</li> <li>• Joe Barbour</li> <li>• Duncan Fraser (ITA)</li> <li>• Andrew Macdonald (ITA)</li> <li>• Jim Miller</li> <li>• Len Steven</li> <li>• Keith Rowick</li> <li>• Alistair Turner</li> <li>• Andrew MacKintosh</li> <li>• Ibrahim Al Hasan</li> <li>• David Purvis</li> <li>• Eric Taylor</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Paul Oldham – HLC Member</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Taxi Tariff - Consultation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ITA proposed 5% increase in Tariff 1; no increase for Tariff 2, 3, 4; abolishing Tariff 5. The flagfall is proposed to remain the same for all Tariffs.</li> <li>• ITA voiced disappointment of the last review; however, it was established that the statutory process for the reviews were followed, and the review in 2023 is considered successful.</li> <li>• 20% increase was agreed in 2023, however, the waiting time has not been updated.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4

- TS advised that any functional change to the meter will require a recalibration.
- Licensing advised that not changing the Tariffs are an option should the cost of recalibration outweighs its necessity, and freezing the waiting times is also an option.
- Independent drivers suggested 5% increase across all tariffs and to keep Tariff 5.
- Booking ahead charge of £1 is proposed to remain the same.
- No change to the fee of the supplementary booking charge, however, a proposal was made to change the wording, which was accepted.
- Soiling charge's maximum is agreed to remain the same.
- Luggage charge is to remain the same, however, there is confusion of its application which needs to be cleared among the drivers.
- It was noted that, while cancellation fee is in the tariffs, it cannot be enforced.
- A proposal was made to include the option to take deposits, however, the Legislation needs to be consulted on this.

## TAXI/PHC SUBGROUP MEETING FORT WILLIAM

WEDNESDAY 06 MARCH 2024

1.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Sean Kennedy – HLC Chair</li> <li>• Sgt Sarah Paterson – Police Scotland</li> <li>• Iain Meredith – HLC (Licensing) Acting Principal Solicitor</li> <li>• Maureen Duffy – HLC (Licensing) Solicitor</li> <li>• Michael Elsey – HLC (Licensing) Senior Licensing Officer</li> <li>• Julie Traynor – HLC (Licensing) Licensing Officer</li> <li>• Mia MacPherson – (Licensing) Clerical Assistant</li> <li>• Patrycja Bujdasz – (Licensing) Clerical Assistant</li> <li>• Colin MacLean</li> <li>• Alisdair Turner</li> <li>• Steve Souness</li> <li>• James Souness</li> <li>• James McMillan</li> <li>• Alan Hendry</li> <li>• Alistair Turner</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Paul Oldham – HLC Member</li> <li>• Cllr Jackie Hendry – HLC Member</li> <li>• Cllr Chris Birt – HLC Member</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Taxi Tariff - Consultation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to keep tariffs as they are, but one suggestion to reduce flagfall with to £2.50 across all tariffs. No other backing for this reduction.</li> <li>• Licensing outlining that a 5% tariff increase has been suggested at Inverness consultation. FW opinion is this would result in less hires in FW. Inverness benefits from a longer tourist trade season. Putting prices up doesn't help as there will be reduced volume of hires.</li> <li>• Increased tariffs are causing less hires and less drivers being attracted to the trade.</li> <li>• Inverness is a different economy – FW and rural areas can't afford a 5% rise.</li> <li>• Drivers saying they've got to pay for meters to be changed. Hence no change at all is remaining consensus of drivers.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4

- General consensus on tariffs is to keep status quo.
- Boxing Day Tariff – there was no account for 5 people or more hire. Boxing Day was just tariff 3 all day. No provision for minibuses carrying more people on tariff 3 on boxing day. Propose little bit extra money for having 8 pax on Boxing Day.
- Consensus: Keep tariffs at status quo.
- **Extra charges:**
- Booking ahead charge of £1 - remain as is – charge isn't used in FW.
- Airport/car parking charge - remain as is.
- Supplementary charge commencing after 3 mile radius – no change. Charge full price from FW. Tell pax before we leave. We charge from the base (eg from FW office if collecting from Spean Bridge).
- Soiling charge – no change. At most, we have charged £40.
- Luggage charge - need to cover extra fuel costs for carrying say 6 bikes with a trailer. Suggest maximum bulk charge to increase to £30. Wouldn't require a change to the meter.
- **Majority preference for no increase to tariffs. Changes as above for extra charges.**

## TAXI/PHC SUBGROUP MEETING WICK

THURSDAY 07 MARCH 2024

1.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Sean Kennedy – HLC Chair</li> <li>• Cllr Willie MacKay – HLC Member</li> <li>• Sgt Sarah Paterson (Teams) – Police Scotland</li> <li>• Iain Meredith – HLC (Licensing) Acting Principal Solicitor</li> <li>• Maureen Duffy – HLC (Licensing) Solicitor</li> <li>• Michael Elsey – HLC (Licensing) Senior Licensing Officer</li> <li>• Brian Travers</li> <li>• Bill Mclrvine</li> <li>• John Irvine</li> <li>• Laurein Irvine</li> <li>• Alistair Turner</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Paul Oldham – HLC Member</li> <li>• Cllr Jackie Hendry – HLC Member</li> <li>• Cllr Chris Birt – HLC Member</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Taxi Tariff - Consultation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LI proposed an increase to Tariff 1 only, other tariffs to remain unchanged.</li> <li>• BT suggests 3 mile radius should be scrapped. Wants meter to run from door of office to pickup location. On current tariff, could lose out up to £6.60. Wants 3 mile radius scrapped due to Wick's location and lots of empty miles here. Broad consensus from other drivers present at meeting.</li> <li>• LI suggesting Tariff 1 increase of 10-20% on both flagfall and yardage.</li> <li>• BT saying night time tariff is fine, as traffic is lighter, so status quo for this tariff.</li> <li>• Licensing advised that last tariff review there was an error with waiting time not going up by the 20% that tariffs were increased by. If HLC agrees to some sort of tariff increase this time, we could use the opportunity to increase meter waiting time to 20%. If tariffs don't go up this review, it's up to drivers to advise whether they want meters to be recalibrated for waiting time alone, or just recalibrate WT if another tariff(s) is being changed.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4

- BT saying chances are tariff(s) will go up, so use the opportunity to increase WT.
- IM saying there have been a range of views expressed at other meetings, ranging from 5% to no change.
- BT saying fuel has gone up this month. Suggesting 'two rates' for waiting times.
- Licensing advising WT is based on both time and distance and not sure of the meters have the capability for different WT rates.
- General driver consensus that tariff one at least needs to increase, car insurance has gone up. Stating there is generally a different view here compared to Fort William and Inverness – if tariff doesn't go up drivers will go bankrupt.
- Concern that views will be presented geographically / weighted differently and licensing advising it is a difficult balancing act for HLC to perform to take into account all consultation views across such a diverse and large geographic area. A range of opinions have been expressed and they will all be represented.
- Consensus: Tariff one only to increase by 10%
- **Extra charges:**
- Booking ahead charge of £1 is proposed to remain the same.
- No change to the fee of the supplementary booking charge, however, a proposal was made to change the wording to include LEZ charges.
- Airport/car parking charge to remain as is
- Supplementary charge commencing after 3 mile radius – remove this distance entirely and meter to start from leaving office/location
- Soiling charge – increase to maximum of £450 to account for time off road (multiple days) and cost of materials / deep clean valeting
- Luggage charge to be £5 per bulky item or within a £5-£30 range at driver discretion. Licensing explaining there requires certainty up front of extra charges.
- **Preference for 10% increase to Tariff One only across flagfall, mileage and waiting time. No change to other tariffs. Changes as above for extra charges.**

**COMPARISON OF COSTS SINCE LAST  
TARIFF REVIEW**

**2021/22 Inflation figures  
(Consumer Price Index)**

	<b>INDEX NAME</b>	<b>START</b>	<b>END</b>	<b>CHANGE</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>ALL ITEMS</b>	109.4	122.3	11.8%
	CPI Index 00 (2015=100)			
	Series: L522			
<b>2</b>	<b>PURCHASE OF VEHICLES (all)</b>	110	124.7	13.4%
	CPIH Index 07.1			
	Series: L543			
	<b>PURCHASE OF NEW CARS</b>	118.2	128.2	8.5%
	CPIH Index 07.1.1A			
	Series L544			
	<b>PURCHASE OF SECOND HAND CARS</b>	97.2	120.3	23.8%
	CPIH Index 07.1.1B			
	Series L545			
<b>3</b>	<b>MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS</b>	113.6	124.5	9.6%
	CPI Index 07.2.3			
	Series: D7ED			
<b>4</b>	<b>PETROL</b>	108.3	150.0	38.5%
	CPI Index 97.2.2.2			
	Series ID: L7FP			
<b>5</b>	<b>DIESEL</b>	108.4	158.0	45.8%
	CPI Index 07.2.2.21			
	Series ID: L7FO			

**Source** – Office for National Statistics ([www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk))

**START** – February 2021

**END** – September 2022

**2023/24 Inflation figures  
(Consumer Price Index)**

	<b>Index name</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>ALL ITEMS</b>	126	130	3.2%
	CPI Index 00 (2015=100)			
	Series: L522			
<b>2</b>	<b>PURCHASE OF VEHICLES (all)</b>	125.4	121.8	-2.9%
	CPIH Index 07.1			
	Series: L543			
	<b>PURCHASE OF NEW CARS</b>	130.7	134.7	3.1%
	CPIH Index 07.1.1A			
	Series: L544			
	<b>PURCHASE OF SECOND HAND CARS</b>	119.6	111.3	-6.9%
	CPIH Index 07.1.1B			
	Series: L545			
<b>3</b>	<b>MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS</b>	129.2	139.8	8.2%
	CPI Index 07.2.3			
	Series: D7ED			
<b>4</b>	<b>PETROL</b>	133.4	126.1	-5.5%
	CPI Index 97.2.2.2			
	Series ID: L7FP			
<b>5</b>	<b>DIESEL</b>	147.4	129	-12.5%
	CPI Index 07.2.2.21			
	Series ID: L7FO			

**Source** – Office for National Statistics

([www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)) Indicators are published monthly

**START** – February 2023

**END** – February 2024