



ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982 - TAXI FARE REVIEW 2020

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Panel on the review of the council's table of taxi fares and associated charges and to ask the Panel to note the changes to the fare table which have been proposed by the relevant trade organisations.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes that a review of the fare table is required under section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 ("the 1982 Act");
2. Notes that consultation has taken place with the relevant trade organisations, as required under section 17(4A)(a) of the 1982 Act;
3. Notes the changes to the fare table which have been proposed by the relevant trade organisations;
4. Notes that following the consultation with the trade organisations the council must propose and publish a new fare table for public consultation; and
5. Recommends to the Council Executive that a proposed new fare table is approved for public consultation.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

- Focusing on our customers' needs
- Being honest, open and accountable
- Working in partnership

II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality

Section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982

Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Outlays will be advertising costs together with staff time costs associated with the process.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	N/A
VIII	Other consultations	West Lothian Taxi Owners Association, West Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Car Owners and Drivers Association & The Fellowship

D TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

Under section 17 of the 1982 Act the council as licensing authority is required to fix fares for the hire of taxis in its area, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a taxi or with the arrangements for its hire, and to review its fare table, detailing these fares and charges, every 18 months.

The council's current fare table came into force on 5 April 2019 and requires to be reviewed in order that the council can publish a new fare table to come into effect on 5 October 2020 for a period of 18 months. In practice metered private hire cars also use the same fare table. A copy of the current fare table is attached as Appendix 1.

The following information indicates the variations made to the fare table at the last four statutory reviews:

2013-14 (fare table effective from 5 September 2014):

No changes.

2015-16 (fare table effective from 5 April 2016)

Yardage referred to in the tariffs reduced from 240 yards to 225 yards.

Time period in tariff 3 reduced from midnight on 2 January to 6am on 2 January.

Engagement fee increased from 40p to 60p.

2016-17 (fare table effective from 5 October 2017)

Soiling fee increased from £25 to £40.

Added additional charge of maximum of £5 to be agreed with passenger for each piece of luggage or additional item carried requiring the assistance of the driver, or which cannot reasonably be lifted by one person.

2018-19 (fare table effective from 5 April 2019)

No changes.

D2 Statutory process for reviewing the fare table

Section 17(4) of the 1982 Act states that before the licensing authority fixes any scales it must carry out a review in accordance with the following steps:

- a) Consult with persons or organisations appearing to it to be, or to be representative of, the operators of taxis operating within its area,
- b) Following such consultation: (i) review the existing scales, and (ii) propose new scales (whether at altered rates or the same rates),
- c) Publish notice of those proposed scales in a newspaper circulating in its area:
 - (i) setting out the proposed scales,
 - (ii) explaining the effect of the proposed scales,
 - (iii) proposing a date on which the proposed scales are to come into effect, and
 - (iv) stating that any person may make representations in writing until the relevant date, being at least one month after the date of the first publication of the notice, and
- d) consider such representations

A copy of the proposed timescale for the review process is attached as Appendix 2.

D3 Representations from the relevant trade organisations

In West Lothian there are currently three trade organisations with respect to the hire car trade: West Lothian Taxi Owners Association, West Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Car Owners and Drivers Association and The Fellowship.

In compliance with the legislation referred to above all three organisations were consulted and asked to put forward any changes that they wished to see made to the fare table. These proposals and related correspondence from the organisations are attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

Representatives from the West Lothian Taxi Owners Association (TOA) and West Lothian Taxi and Private Hire Car Owners and Drivers Association (WLT&PCO&D) have agreed a common proposal with regard to changes to the fare table. However, they were not able to agree a common position with The Fellowship. Therefore the council is required to consider both proposals for changes to the fare table and decide what changes, if any, should be proposed and published for public consultation.

In summary the requested changes are as follows:

	<u>TOA/ WLT&PCO&D</u>	<u>FELLOWSHIP</u>
Additional yardage in tariffs 1 - 3	Reduce from 225 yards to 210 yards	Reduce from 225 yards to 208 yards
Flagdrop yardage in tariffs 1 - 3	n/a	Reduce from 190 yards to 175 yards
Max charge for luggage	Increase from 40p to 60p so that a 3 rd item could be charged at 20p	n/a
Engagement fee	Increase from 60p to £1	n/a
Period of waiting times in tariffs	n/a	Reduce from 43 seconds to 40 seconds
Tariff 2	n/a	Amend coverage to hires commencing Monday to Friday 1800 to 2200 and Saturday and Sunday 0600 to 2200
New Tariff 3	n/a	Incorporate a new Tariff for hires commencing Monday to Sunday 2200 to 0600, £3 for the initial 175 yards and £0.20 thereafter for every 180 yards, additional period of waiting time to be 40 seconds
New Tariff 4 (currently Tariff 3) Festive Period tariff	n/a	To extend the coverage of the current Tariff 3 to 6am on 27 December and 6am on 3 January and rename Tariff 4.

A briefing note setting out what factors should be considered when reviewing the fare table together with relevant inflation figures is attached as Appendix 4. In summary the council should have primary regard to the costs incurred by the trade such as costs of vehicles, fuel and drivers and the public interest in ensuring the maintenance of an adequate taxi service by giving the trade a fair return.

A comparison of the current tariffs compared with the effect of the proposed changes from the trade is attached as Appendix 5.

E. CONCLUSION

The council as licensing authority is required to comply with section 17 of the 1982 Act by reviewing its taxi fare table every 18 months in consultation with local trade organisations and thereafter to publish notice of any proposed changes to its fare table and to consider any representations made in writing regarding the proposed changes.

The Panel is invited to note that a decision is required by the Council Executive to agree a draft fare table for public consultation after considering the information in this report and any further submissions made to the Council Executive by the trade organisations or any other taxi operators in West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: copy of current Fare Table for Taxi and Metered Private Hire Cars operative from 5 April 2019

Appendix 2: proposed timescale for fare table review 2020

Appendix 3: copy proposals for changes to the fare table from the trade organisations

Appendix 4: Briefing Note – Factors to consider and inflation figures

Appendix 5: Effect of proposed changes on tariffs – Comparison tables

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