

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: REVIEW OF TAXI FARE SCALES AND OTHER CHARGES
Meeting: ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
Date: 17 August 2010
Author: ACTING DIRECTOR OF LAW & ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 17(2) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 imposes a duty on Licensing Authorities to fix, from time to time, the scales for fares and other charges for the hire of taxis at intervals not exceeding 18 months from the date on which the scales came into effect. At the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee on 2 June 2009, the last review was concluded and the new tariff was implemented at midnight on 3 August 2009.
- 1.2 Before fixing any scales or undertaking such a review, the Licensing Authority is required:-
- (i) to consult with persons or organisations appearing to them to be, or be representative of, the operators of taxis operating within their area;
 - (ii) to give notice of their intention by advertisement in a newspaper circulating in their area stating, (a) the general effect of the proposals and the date when they propose that their decision will take effect; and (b) that any person may lodge written representations with respect to the proposals within a period of one month after the date of the first publication of the notice; and
 - (iii) to consider any such representations duly lodged.
- 1.3 As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, the Authority last reviewed taxi fares in June 2009 at which time, as part of the consultation process, representatives of the trade were invited to be heard by this Committee in support of proposals put forward by the trade. Two members of the trade addressed Committee on the proposals contained within the report and whilst supportive of the proposals, advocated a modest increase in the running mile to offset calibration costs. This proposal was accepted by Members.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, the Licensing Authority must conclude a review of charges within 18 months from the date of the last scales/ charges came into effect. In order to comply with this timescale, the licensing section commenced discussions with the trade by way of the informal taxi forum initially at a meeting in February 2010.
- 2.2 Following on from the February meeting, members of the forum were invited to submit proposals on any suggested increase to the taxi tariff to the Licensing Authority. The matter was discussed at the March meeting and the following changes were suggested:-

- (i) Re-introduction of the former Tariff 3 for the Falkirk “Fair” Holidays
- (ii) Tariff 2 to apply from Friday evening until Monday morning.
- (iii) 10p increase in flag fall.
- (iv) Reduction in distance of flag fall from 880 yards to 660 yards.
- (v) Status Quo.
- (vi) Nominal increase (3%) in the running mile

2.3 The views narrated above were fully discussed at the meeting of the Taxi Forum on 25 March 2010 and options (i) to (v) were generally discounted. Option (vi) was supported by all in attendance.

3. STRUCTURE OF TAXI TARIFF

3.1 Members will recall that as part of the review of taxi fares in 2009, the General Tariff was increased with the “Distance Charge” beyond the first 880 yards was increased from 10p (for every 114 yards or part thereof - £1.55 per mile) to 10p for every 111 yards or part thereof -£1.58 per mile). In addition, a festive tariff was agreed. The current Taxi Tariff is attached as appendix 1 to the report.

4. TAXI TARIFF PROPOSALS

4.1 The trade representatives highlighted increasing fuel costs as a major factor in the effective provision of a taxi service and feel that a modest increase of 3% in the running mile will offset the additional financial burden they feel they are carrying. This would amount to the running mile on Tariff1 being subject to an increase from £1.58 to £1.63. The trade representatives were content for the status quo to remain in respect of flag fall and miscellaneous charges. Members will also be aware that since the last review, the Council has increased the testing fee charges.

4.2 Having scrutinised the proposal it is considered that the modest increase requested is not unreasonable. However, it is for Members to consider whether an increase in the running mile by 3% is acceptable. To set the figure into context, a table detailing where Falkirk is currently positioned in terms of the running mile costs with other Scottish local authorities is contained in appendix 2 to the report. It is of note that should Members be minded to agree to an increase of 3% in the running mile, Falkirk would be placed 17th in a table of 32 other local authorities in terms of the cost of the running mile.

4.3 In the event that Members wish to support the request put forward by the trade representatives, the distance charge would be amended as follows:-

- “Distance Charge” beyond the first 880 yards 10p for every 111 yards Current
- “Distance Charge” beyond the first 880 yards 10p for every 108 yards 3% increase

5. TAXI METERS

- 5.1 The Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services has indicated that in line with previous practice a charge will require to be made for undertaking the necessary taxi meter calibration tests and that the appropriate fee will require to be set at £14 on a full cost recovery basis; this being the same fee as charged in August 2009.

6. ATTENDANCE BY TRADE

- 6.1 The trade organisations who participated in the informal taxi forum which considered the tariff review have been invited to attend the Meeting to be heard in support of the proposals on the matter.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That Members consider the terms of this Report with particular reference to the request made by the taxi trade as detailed in paragraph 4.1, together with any submissions made at the Meeting, and approve a draft fares scale for press advertisement with a proposed implementation date of midnight on 3 February 2011.
- 7.2 That Members consider and approve the taxi meter calibration test fee detailed in paragraph 5.1;
- 7.3 That any written representations received against the proposed fares scale in response to the press advertisement be the subject of a further report to this Committee; and
- 7.4 That in the event there are no written representations received in response to the press advertisement, the draft fares scale agreed by the Committee be submitted direct to the Policy and Resources Committee for final determination.

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Acting Director of Law & Administration Services

Date: 25 July 2010

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Current taxi tariff / fares scale.
2. Note of Meeting of the Taxi Forum held on 25 March 2010
3. Note of Meeting of the Taxi Forum held on 25 February 2010