



Agenda Item 9

Review of Taxi Fare Scales and Other Charges

Falkirk Council

Title: Review of Taxi fare scales and other charges
Meeting: Executive
Date: 12 September 2024
Submitted By: Director of Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to detail for consideration, the responses received to the taxi fare scales consultation recently undertaken.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Executive is asked to agree the unchanged taxi tariff at Appendix 3**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 11 June 2024, the Executive agreed to adopt an unchanged taxi tariff. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 1 to the report. In accordance with the legislation, this decision was advertised in the local newspaper and subject to a 4-week consultation. In addition, and to maximise the scope of the consultation, it was also published on the Council's website, and all licensed operators were either emailed or written to with a copy of the report.
- 3.2 It was further agreed that should any representations be made then these should be considered at a future meeting of the Executive for a final decision.

4. Responses to the consultation

- 4.1 There were 7 trade responses received in relation to the proposed changes to the taxi fares and scales and they are attached as Appendix 2 to the report.
- 4.2 The original suggestion to maintain the status quo with no changes to the taxi fares and scales were proposed by the Taxi Forum trade representatives.

5. Consideration of the responses

- 5.1 Officers have carefully considered the comments received and would offer the following by way of a response.
- 5.2 The new festive tariff rate that was introduced last year has attracted some adverse comment from within the trade and this is referred to in the attached comments. It must be borne in mind that the final charge displayed on the taxi meter is the maximum cost that can be charged. Each driver has it within their gift to offer a reduced rate.
- 5.3 It is the view of officers that there should be no change to the current taxi tariff.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 There is no direct financial impact on the Council.

Resources

- 6.2 There are no resource implications arising from the report.

Legal

- 6.3 The legal implication arising from the report recommendations is that the Council continues to fulfil its duty to fix taxi fare scales at regular intervals in terms of Section 17(2) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

Risk

- 6.4 There are no risks to the Council identified as a result of this report.

Equalities

- 6.5 An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 4. The Assessment shows there will be limited impacts across all protected characteristics – impact on taxi trade with no increase in charges.
- 6.6 The Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities guidance, issued April 2012 advises that authorities should pay particular regard to advice contained in the Scottish Development Department Circular 25/1986. It states that, "in fixing fares authorities will want to pay primary regard to the costs incurred by the trade, having regard to the capital costs (including interest payments) of the vehicles, the costs of maintaining and replacing them to the standard of the licensing authority, of employing drivers and

the prevailing level of wages and costs in related road transport industries. The public interest is best served by ensuring the maintenance of an adequate taxi service by giving the trade a fair return rather than depressing fares for social reasons, however understandable”.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

6.7 There is no environmental impact arising from the contents of the report.

7. Conclusions

7.1 It is proposed that the maintenance of the status quo with no increase to the taxi fare level and charges as agreed by the Executive are finalised.

Director of Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services

Author – Bryan Douglas, Licensing Co-ordinator 01324 501262,
bryan.douglas@falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 23 August 2024

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Report to the Executive – 11 June 2024.

Appendix 2 - Table detailing responses

Appendix 3 - Tariff table

Appendix 4 - Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

No papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Falkirk Council

Title: Review of Taxi Fare Scales and other Charges
Meeting: Executive
Date: 11 June 2024
Submitted By: Director of Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report details the statutory requirement to review the taxi tariff and outlines the views of the Taxi Forum.
- 1.2 The review supports sustainable taxi and private hire provision in the council area and relates to the Council Plan Priority of supporting a thriving economy and green transition.

2. Recommendation**2.1 the Executive is asked to agree: -**

(1) to adopt an unchanged tariff

(2) to instruct the Chief Governance Officer to advertise the fares scales and charges to take effect from 1 October 2024, and

(3) In the event of any written representations being received, in respect of the published proposals, a further report will be prepared for consideration by the Executive, and

(4) If no representations are received, the proposal will be held as confirmed and formally notified to the consultees.

3. Climate Change Impact

- 3.1 The climate change implication would depend on whether unchanged fares act as an incentive to increase demand for taxis. Otherwise, the status quo being maintained should have a neutral climate change impact.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 imposes a duty on all Councils to fix, from time to time, the maximum charges for the hire of taxis. The last change to the tariff was introduced in December 2023.
- 4.2 Before fixing any scales or undertaking such a review the Council must:

- (i) consult with persons or organisations appearing to them to be, or be representative of, the operators of taxis operating within their area.
 - (ii) give notice of their intention by advertisement in a newspaper in its area stating, (a) the general effect of the proposals and the date when they propose that its 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) consider any such representations duly lodged.
- 4.3 Once a decision on fares and other charges is taken (even if the review decision is to leave them unchanged), notice of that decision must be served on those persons and organisations who have been consulted as part of the process.
- 4.4 Operators of taxis can appeal against licensing authorities' decisions on tariff reviews. Appeals are made direct to the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland and should be submitted within 14 days of the decision.
- 4.5 As mentioned in paragraph 4.1 the Council last changed tariff at the meeting of the Executive on 17 October 2023. The new tariff came into effect in December 2023.

Matters to be considered when undertaking a fare review:

- 4.6 The Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities guidance, issued April 2012 advises that authorities should pay particular regard to advice contained in the Scottish Development Department Circular 25/1986. It states that, "in fixing fares authorities will want to pay primary regard to the costs incurred by the trade, having regard to the capital costs (including interest payments) of the vehicles, the costs of maintaining and replacing them to the standard of the licensing authority, of employing drivers and the prevailing level of wages and costs in related road transport industries. The public interest is best served by ensuring the maintenance of an adequate taxi service by giving the trade a fair return rather than depressing fares for social reasons, however understandable".

5. Consultation

The members of the Taxi Forum were identified as persons who are representative of operators of taxis, and they were invited to make representations in respect of the taxi tariff at a meeting in April. The Forum trade members consist of the taxi businesses that account for approximately half of all taxi and private car operator licences. The Forum was not in favour of any increase in the taxi tariff currently.

6. Taxi Tariff

Structure of Taxi Tariff

- 6.1 As part of the review in taxi fares in 2023, the public holidays were rationalised and replaced with a festive tariff, changes were also made to soilage charges and a new charge for larger style vehicles was introduced.
- 6.2 The current fare table for taxis is attached as an appendix to the report.

7. Consideration

- 7.1 In considering whether the current tariff structure should be changed, regard was given to the trend in fuel prices. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero issues weekly statistical data which includes reference to road fuel prices. The most recent information published on 20 May 2024 shows that diesel is, on average, 2p per litre more expensive and petrol 3p per litre higher than when the last tariff review was concluded in December 2023.
- 7.2 According to figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI), and based on analysis of policies sold, the typical price paid for comprehensive motor insurance in the first quarter of 2024 was £635, marking a 1% increase on the previous quarter.
- 7.3 Considering this information, and the responses received from the Taxi Forum, the recommendation is that, on balance, no increase should be proposed this year.

8. Implications

Financial

- 8.1 There is no direct financial implication on the Council.

Resources

- 8.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 8.3 The legal implication arising from the report recommendations is that the Council continues to fulfil its duty to fix taxi fare scales at regular intervals in terms of section 17(2) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

Risk

- 8.4 None identified.

Equalities

- 8.5 A full EPIA will be carried out once the consultation responses have been ingathered. An initial review by officers suggests that an unchanged tariff will have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 8.6 There is no environmental impact arising from the contents of the report.

9. Conclusions

9.1 An unchanged tariff is recommended for public consultation.



Director of Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services

Author – Bryan Douglas, Licensing Co-ordinator 01324 501262,
bryan.douglas@falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 31 May 2024

Appendices

1. Current Taxi Tariff

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- None.

Falkirk Council Taxi Tariff



Effective from 01 December 2023

TARIFF 1: GENERAL

FOR THE FIRST 880 YARDS OR 293.3 SECONDS , OR A COMBINATION OF TIME AND DISTANCE THERE IS A CHARGE OF:	£3.00
--	--------------

FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL 171 YARDS OR 57 SECONDS , OR A COMBINATION OF TIME AND DISTANCE THERE IS A CHARGE OF:	20p
--	------------

TARIFF 2: UNSOCIAL HOURS (Tariff 1 + 25%)

JOURNEYS BEGINNING BETWEEN 9PM AND 6AM	£3.75
--	--------------

TARIFF 3: CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR (Tariff 1 + 100%)

FROM: 9pm on 24 DECEMBER to 6am on 27 DECEMBER and, 9pm on 31 DECEMBER to 6am on 03 JANUARY .	£6.00
---	--------------

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

(A) WHERE A TAXI HAS BEEN BOOKED IN ADVANCE AN ENGAGEMENT CHARGE CAN BE MADE. THAT CHARGE IS:	50p
--	------------

(B) WHERE A MULTI-PURPOSE VEHICLE (MPV) HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A HIRE FOR MORE THAN 4 PASSENGERS OR FOR ITEMS UNSUITABLE FOR A STANDARD VEHICLE (NOT INCLUDING WHEELCHAIR PASSENGERS) A CHARGE CAN BE MADE. THAT CHARGE IS:	£5
---	-----------

(C) WHERE A PASSENGER'S BEHAVIOUR RESULTS IN A VEHICLE NEEDING TO BE CLEANED, THE DRIVER WILL BE ENTITLED TO CHARGE A CLEANING FEE. THAT FEE IS:	£100
---	-------------

THESE FARES ARE THE MAXIMUM THAT CAN BE CHARGED IN THE FALKIRK COUNCIL AREA.

Responses to proposed changes to Taxi Tariff

Trade Comment

1. No change to the flag fall but tariff 2 should start at 6pm till 6am as if you are an employee for a company, you get time half from 6pm then after 12.00pm you are on double time.

2. Other than reverse the Xmas tariff, no change.

3. In Agreement that the fares should not increase.

4. I think there should be no increase to the tariff but should do away with the tariff 3 over Christmas and New Year and just have tariff 2 from Christmas Eve to the 27th and New Year's Eve to the 3rd January.

5. I would put the tariff back to how it was before last increase to £6 . Personally I was as busy as usual as people would not pay the new £6 rise .

6. Dear Sir/Madam,

As the tariff stands just now where fares are doubled over the Christmas and New Year Period. As a taxi driver I did have a few irate passengers. People who started back work on the 27th of December and also the 3rd of January, (before 6am) As you are aware these dates are NOT holidays. But the customers were still being charged double fare.

Will you be looking at these charges?.

7. No change to the flag fall but tariff 2 should start at 6pm till 6am as if you are an employee for a company you get time half from 6pm then after 12.00pm you are on double time

Falkirk Council Taxi Tariff



Effective from 01 December 2023

TARIFF 1: GENERAL

FOR THE FIRST 880 YARDS OR 293.3 SECONDS , OR A COMBINATION OF TIME AND DISTANCE THERE IS A CHARGE OF:	£3.00
--	--------------

FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL 171 YARDS OR 57 SECONDS , OR A COMBINATION OF TIME AND DISTANCE THERE IS A CHARGE OF:	20p
--	------------

TARIFF 2: UNSOCIAL HOURS (Tariff 1 + 25%)

JOURNEYS BEGINNING BETWEEN 9PM AND 6AM	£3.75
--	--------------

TARIFF 3: CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR (Tariff 1 + 100%)

FROM: 9pm on 24 DECEMBER to 6am on 27 DECEMBER and, 9pm on 31 DECEMBER to 6am on 03 JANUARY .	£6.00
---	--------------

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

(A) WHERE A TAXI HAS BEEN BOOKED IN ADVANCE AN ENGAGEMENT CHARGE CAN BE MADE. THAT CHARGE IS:	50p
--	------------

(B) WHERE A MULTI-PURPOSE VEHICLE (MPV) HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A HIRE FOR MORE THAN 4 PASSENGERS OR FOR ITEMS UNSUITABLE FOR A STANDARD VEHICLE (NOT INCLUDING WHEELCHAIR PASSENGERS) A CHARGE CAN BE MADE. THAT CHARGE IS:	£5
---	-----------

(C) WHERE A PASSENGER'S BEHAVIOUR RESULTS IN A VEHICLE NEEDING TO BE CLEANED, THE DRIVER WILL BE ENTITLED TO CHARGE A CLEANING FEE. THAT FEE IS:	£100
---	-------------

THESE FARES ARE THE MAXIMUM THAT CAN BE CHARGED IN THE FALKIRK COUNCIL AREA.

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services Governance & Human Resources	Lead Officer Name:	Bryan Douglas
		Team:	Licensing
		Tel:	01324501262
		Email:	bryan.douglas@falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	Annual review of taxi fares and charges	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	No	Yes	No	No

Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	No	Yes	No	No

Other, please specify: Once agreed there will be further engagement with the Taxi Trade.

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

01/10/2024	Confirm the charges and fare scales remain unchanged.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	N/A	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	N/A	
	Expected Annual Income Total:	N/A	
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:		
	End Date (if any):		

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The suggestion to keep the fares and charges unchanged was proposed by the Taxi Forum trade members, who used their own evidence of costs.

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The proposal was discussed with the Taxi Forum who are representative of the taxi trade. In addition, the proposals were subject to a statutory consultation process. This included the public and also the wider taxi trade. The proposal was also agreed by the Executive subject to any responses from the statutory consultation.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	The proposal was recommended by the Taxi Forum.
What gaps in data / information were identified?	None
Is further research necessary?	No
If NO, please state why.	The proposal was subject to full consultation with the taxi trade and public.

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	The Taxi Forum suggested no change to the current taxi fares. This proposal was endorsed by the Executive and then advertised in the Falkirk Herald with public comment invited. The proposal was also placed on the Falkirk Council website. The wider taxi trade were also consulted.	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	Yes	The Taxi Forum agreed that there should be no increase in fare levels this year.
Survey	No	
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify	Public Advert in the Falkirk Herald (this is a statutory requirement) inviting comment. No comments received. Details placed on the Council website. No comments received. Wider taxi trade consulted and comments received.	
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	No	
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Disability		✓		Wheelchair users often rely on taxis for transport. No increase in fares will have a positive impact on this group.
Sex	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Ethnicity	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Sexual Orientation	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Transgender	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Poverty		✓		Persons in poverty may not have access to private transport and be totally reliant on public transport such as taxis. No increase in fares will have a positive impact on this group
Care Experienced	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			There will be no increase to the fares and charges for all users.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	There is a risk to the taxi trade that they will not be able to offset potential increases in operating costs with an increase in taxi fares and charges.			

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	No increase in charges will benefit those users who are in poverty and who rely on using taxi services.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	Encourage participation in public life.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	Yes	The Taxi trade.
Councils	No	
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	No	
Integration Joint Board	No	
Police	No	
Third Sector	No	
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

The Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Cr Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities guidance, issued April 2012, advises that local authorities will want to pay primary regard to the costs incurred by the trade. Furthermore, the guidance states that the public interest is best served by ensuring the maintenance of an adequate taxi service by giving the trade a fair return rather than depressing fares for social reason, however understandable. An annual review of the fares and charges enables regular review of the fares and charges.

Are actions being reported to Members?

Yes

If yes when and how ?

Executive meeting on 12 September 2024.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	No increase will have an overall minimal impact on groups. There may be some impact on the taxi trade if other costs increase. This may be offset by no decrease in passenger numbers (that may have resulted from an increase in fares and charges).
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:		Date:	22/08/2024
------------	--	-------	------------

SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
--	-----

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA	Engagement with taxi representatives did not highlight any negative impacts. Proposal was shared with public and no responses were received
--	---

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes / No	If YES, please describe:
---	----------	--------------------------

LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL	Yes / No	COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes	Not increasing taxi fares may have a positive impact on people in poverty and with disabilities as some of them will use taxis more frequently than the wider population.

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:		Date:	23/08/2024