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| Report to: | PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE |
| Relevant Officer: | Lee Petrak, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager |
| Date of Meeting: | 8 September 2021 |

TAXI FARES REVIEW FOR 2021/22 – BLACKPOOL LICENSED TAXI OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (B.L.T.O.A.) SUBMISSION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To review taxi fares following the submission of an application by Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association (B.L.T.O.A.) for proposed changes to the Blackpool Hackney Carriage tariffs to commence in October 2021.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the request made by B.L.T.O.A. for Blackpool Council to amend the Blackpool Hackney Carriage tariffs as outlined in 2.2 to 2.6:

2.2 That a change be made to the yardage and maximum tariffs for 2021/22 as outlined in the table attached in appendix 3(a).

2.3 That the start time of Tariff 2 be brought forward from 22.00 to 21.00 Monday to Friday.

2.4 That the start time of Tariff 3 be brought forward from 01.00 to midnight every night.

2.5 That a change be made to the taxi meter waiting time for Tariff 1 from 20 pence every 40 seconds to 20 pence every 35 seconds.

2.6 That a change be made to the taxi meter waiting time for Tariff 2, Tariff 3 and Tariff 4 from 20 pence every 40 seconds to 20 pence every 30 seconds.

2.7 To approve the fare increase for advertisement, if no objections are received to authorise the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager to implement the fare increase.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The last increase was approved by the Sub-Committee on 5 June 2018 and prior to that on 1 September 2015. The last approved increase that involved a reduction to the yardage was agreed on 23 August 2012. The Licensing Service are in support of the proposed fare increase in principle and given the amount of time that has elapsed since the last agreed increase it is considered appropriate.

3.2 Private Hire and Taxi Monthly magazine reports that the average taxi fare for a two mile Tariff 1 journey is currently £6.00. This increase will mean that Blackpool is in line with the national average. Blackpool’s current maximum fare of £5.80 for a Tariff 1 two mile journey puts it in a league table position range of 209 – 236 out of 362 local authorities. The proposed increase would change that to 160 - 196 out of 362 local authorities.

3.3 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.4 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No changes to be introduced and the Blackpool Hackney Carriage tariffs to remain the same.

4.2 Agree to the proposed changes with amendments.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool.”

6.0 Background information

6.1 Blackpool Council has previously, after consultation with the licensed taxi trade, agreed the principle of using a formula to establish appropriate taxi fares which reflect average wages, vehicle running costs and enhanced insurance premiums. That formula has not been used to calculate this fare increase though the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager would consider the proposed fares reasonable and in line with the national average.

Examples of the percentage increase per mile for each tariff is detailed below:

| | 1 Mile Journey | 2 Mile Journey | 4 Mile Journey | 5 Mile Journey |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tariff 1 | 5% increase | 3.45% increase | 4.25% increase | 5.36% increase |
| Tariff 2 | 4.35% increase | 5.71% increase | 6.90% increase | 5.72% increase |
| Tariff 3 | 3.85% increase | 5.26% increase | 6.56% increase | 5.48% increase |

The overall average increase is 5.29%

The full table of proposed charges is detailed in appendix 3(a) (B.L.T.O.A – Fare increase submission).

6.2 Proposal to reduce the yardage between which the 20 pence fare increases on the meter:

Tariff 1 - The starting fare remains at £2.60 but the passenger gets a reduced yardage from 400 to 372 yards for that fare, thereafter they get a reduced 186 yards per 20 pence as opposed to 200 yards previously.

Tariff 2 - The starting fare remains at £2.60 but the passenger gets a reduced yardage from 300 to 280 yards for that fare, thereafter they get a reduced 140 yards per 20 pence as opposed to 150 yards previously.

Tariff 3 - The starting fare remains at £3.20 but the passenger gets a reduced yardage from 300 to 280 yards for that fare, thereafter they get a reduced 140 yards per 20 pence as opposed to 150 yards previously.

Tariff 4 - The starting fare remains at £5.20 but the passenger gets a reduced yardage from 300 to 280 yards for that fare, thereafter they get a reduced 140 yards per 20 pence as opposed to 150 yards previously.

6.3 Proposal to bring forward the start time of Tariffs 2 and 3:

Tariff 2 which is currently effective from 22.00 is proposed to be brought forward to take effect from 21.00. It is payable to drivers for working anti-social hours. This measure will help ensure taxi availability at this time is maintained by bringing forward the late hours' supplement of reduced yardage on the fare from 22.00 to 21.00.

Tariff 3 which is currently effective from 01.00 is proposed to be brought forward to take effect from midnight. It is payable to drivers for working anti-social hours. This measure will help ensure taxi availability at this time is maintained by bringing forward the early hours' supplement of an additional 60 pence on the fare from 01.00 to midnight.

6.4 Proposal to change the waiting time for Tariffs 1, 2, 3 and 4:

The waiting time for Tariff 1 is proposed to be changed from 20 pence every 45 seconds to 20 pence every 40 seconds. It has been set at the current rate since July 2018. This small increase will assist drivers to offset rising costs without unduly raising fares.

The waiting time for Tariffs 2, 3 and 4 is proposed to be changed from 20 pence every 40 seconds to 20 pence every 30 seconds. It has been set at the current rate since July 2018. This increase will ensure the taxi trade can provide a service during unsociable hours and be adequately rewarded for that service.

6.5 The taxi trade has reported a shortage of drivers recently particularly during the evening/night and it is hoped these measures will help to assist in bridging that gap. B.L.T.O.A has stated in their submission that there have been complaints that there are insufficient

drivers late at night and in the early hours of the morning. Following informal discussions with Private Hire Operators and B.L.T.O.A. the Licensing Service would support those concerns.

6.6 The B.L.T.O.A. submission containing the full calculation of fares and proposed changes are attached at Appendix 3(a).

6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 3(a) - B.L.T.O.A. fare increase submission.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 A representative from the Council's Legal Services team will be available to advise the Sub Committee.

9.2 The proposal, if granted by the Sub-Committee, will need to be advertised before it can be implemented.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

