

**Report to:** **PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:** Lee Petrak, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager

**Date of Meeting:** 17 January 2023

## **TAXI FARES - BLACKPOOL LICENSED TAXI OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (B.L.T.O.A.) SUBMISSION**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To consider 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 February 2023.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To consider the proposed changes to the Blackpool Hackney Carriage Tariff as proposed by Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association namely:

- i. That a change be made to the yardage and maximum tariffs as outlined in the table attached in Appendix 3(a).
- ii. To change the taxi meter waiting time for Tariff 1 from 20p every 35 seconds to 20p every 30 seconds.
- iii. That the start time for Tariff 2 which is currently 9pm Monday to Friday is brought forward to 8pm Monday to Friday.
- iv. That an additional charge of 90p be made for the carriage of cycles.
- v. That the cleaning charge for passengers that soil the taxi be increased from £40 to £50.
- vi. That the Tariff 4 to now be effective from 10pm on the 24<sup>th</sup> December to 6am on the 27<sup>th</sup> December and 10pm on the 31<sup>st</sup> December to 6am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January.
- vii. That Tariff 2 to be the minimum fare effective between 27<sup>th</sup> December and 29<sup>th</sup> December.

viii. To agree to the continuation of the 30p fuel surcharge until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 as detailed at Paragraph 6.7.

2.2 Subject to 2.1 To approve the fare increase for advertisement and 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 fare increase was approved by the Sub-Committee in September 2021. In addition, in March 2022 an incremental surcharge was introduced to assist the trade in respect of the escalating cost of fuel.

According to Government statistics, the current situation regarding fuel costs indicates that the cost of a litre of fuel is decreasing. The cost of a litre of petrol is decreasing at a faster rate than diesel. The vast majority of Hackney Carriages use Diesel fuel. Despite this, fuel costs still appear to be unstable and the overall price of fuel is significantly higher per litre than it was when the Committee last considered the current fare structure in 2021.

The trade reports that operating costs are increasing. They report that vehicle insurance costs have increased between 10-25%. They also report that maintenance costs have risen between 20-90%. The trade report that rising vehicle costs have also impacted on the sourcing of replacement and new vehicles. The Trading Standards and Licensing Manager does not consider the proposals to be unreasonable in the present economic climate.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? No

**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.

**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 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 delegates discretionary powers to local authorities to fix Hackney Carriage fares in their district. A proposal has been received by B.L.T.O.A to review current taxi fares. A proposal to increase the overall fares to be charged to that outlined in Appendix 3a. The proposal also includes the following additions and amendments. Outlined below in paragraphs 6.2 to 6.7.

6.2 *The waiting time is changed from 20p every 35 seconds to 20p every 30 seconds.*

It is the opinion of B.L.T.O.A this increase will assist drivers to offset rising costs without unduly raising fares. This change will achieve parity with all other tariffs.

6.3 *Tariff 2 that is currently effective from 9pm Monday to Friday is brought forward to 8pm Monday to Friday.*

It is the opinion of B.L.T.O.A that This change will assist the Hackney Carriage trade in being marginally more competitive with the Private Hire trade, who are not subject to the same charging restrictions.

6.4 *A new Extra charge for carrying cycles for 90p*

B.L.T.O.A reports that cycles take up significant space in the vehicle and therefore propose this nominal extra charge in line with other charges.

6.5 *The Cleaning charge for passengers that soil the taxi be increased from £40 to £50.*

B.L.T.O.A believe this is a reasonable charge for what can be a time consuming, difficult and offensive task for drivers.

6.6 *Tariff 4 to be effective from 10pm on the 24th December to 6am on the 27th December and 10pm on the 31st December to 6am on the 2nd January. And Tariff 2 to be the minimum fare effective between 27th December and 29th December.*

It is the view of Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association that the proposed amendments will assist the Hackney Carriage trade in being more competitive with the Private Hire trade during the festive season.

## 6.7 *Continuation of the fuel surcharge until 31st March 2024*

The uncertainty around the cost of fuel makes it difficult to propose any longer term proposals at this time and it is therefore considered reasonable by the Licensing Service to continue the fuel surcharge which was agreed on in March of 2022 as an incremental structure. Given the original implementation of the surcharge was as a short term measure if its continuation until March 2024 is agreed by the Sub- Committee then it is proposed to also more deeply integrate it into the fare chart for clarity.

### **Diesel**

- i. £1.50 or above 1 extra surcharge of 30p to be added for each journey
- ii. £1.65 or above – 2 extras added.
- iii. £1.80 or above – 3 extras added.
- iv. £1.95 or above – 4 extras added.

### **Unleaded**

- v. £1.48 or above 1 extra surcharge of 30p to be added for each journey
- vi. £1.63 or above – 2 extras added.
- vii. £1.78 or above – 3 extras added.
- viii. £1.93 or above – 4 extras added.

6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

## **7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 Appendix 3a Fares Proposed by BLTOA 2022 – 2023.  
Appendix 3b Justification and Details.

## **8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 None

## **9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 The Head of Legal will be represented 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.