

Report to:	PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Lee Petrak, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Date of Meeting:	20 February 2024

TAXI FARES REVIEW FOR 2024/25 – BLACKPOOL TAXI ASSOCIATION (B.T.A) SUBMISSION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider an application by the Blackpool Taxi Association (B.T.A) for proposed changes to the Blackpool Hackney Carriage tariffs to commence in March 2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To consider the proposed changes to the Blackpool Hackney Carriage Tariff as proposed by Blackpool Taxi Association as outlined at 2.2 to 2.5
- 2.2 That a change be made to the yardage and maximum tariffs as outlined in the table attached in Appendix 3(a).
- 2.3 That a change be made to add 40 pence to the taxi meter starting price on Tariff 3 from £3.20 to £3.60.
- 2.4 That a change be made to add 40 pence to the taxi meter starting price on Tariff 4 from £5.20 to £5.60.
- 2.5 That Tariff 2 be the minimum fare effective between 6.00hrs on 27 December and 18.00hrs on 31 December.
- 2.6 Subject to 2.1 to approve the fare increase for advertisement and to agree 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 17 January 2023 and involved wholesale changes to the fare structure. This was largely due the economic climate and the impact of increased fuel costs.

Since the last increase was approved fuel prices have somewhat stabilised. According to the

government weekly road fuel price statistics the average price of Diesel for 2023 was 156.53 pence per litre and Petrol was 146.73 pence per litre. This equates to approximately 20 pence less per litre of fuel for both Diesel and Petrol than the average price per litre for 2022, however the cost of living and costs associated with running and maintaining vehicles continues to increase.

An Unmet Demand Survey for Hackney Carriage vehicles was undertaken, which included rank observations that highlighted some passenger waiting at times of high demand. A recommendation was made in the final report suggesting an increase to fares at times of high demand may be of benefit.

- 3.2 Private Hire and Taxi Monthly magazine reports that the average taxi fare for a two mile Tariff 1 journey is currently £7.23. This increase will mean that Blackpool is below the national average. Blackpool's current maximum fare of £6.60 for a Tariff 1 two mile journey puts it in a league table position range of 223 – 237 out of 344 local authorities. The proposed increase would change that to a maximum fare of £6.80 for a Tariff 1 two mile journey and put it in a league table position of 183 - 209 out of 344 local authorities.

The Trading Standards and Licensing Manager does not consider the proposals to be unreasonable given the increases in the cost of living and the need to encourage drivers to service ranks at times of peak demand.

- 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 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.T.A to review current taxi fares. A proposal to increase the overall fares to be charged is outlined in Appendix 3a. The proposal also includes the

following additions and amendments. Outlined below in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3.

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	4.35% increase	6.06% increase	5.56% increase	4.62% increase
Tariff 2	0% increase	7.5% increase	8.96% increase	10.0% increase
Tariff 3	10% increase	9.3% increase	8.57% increase	12.04% increase

The overall average increase is 9.12%

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

6.2 *40 pence to be added to the taxi meter starting price on Tariff 3 and 4.*

B.T.A consider the 40 pence increase modest and it should be noted that the starting price for Tariff 3 and 4 has not been increased in over 15 years. Tariff 3 is operative from midnight to 06.00hrs daily and it is the opinion of B.T.A this increase to the starting price will encourage drivers to service ranks at peak demand times.

6.3 *Tariff 2 to be effective from 6.00hrs on 27 December until 18.00hrs on 31 December.*

It is the opinion of B.T.A this increase will assist the hackney carriage trade in continuing to remain competitive with the private hire trade during the festive season.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 3(a) - B.T.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 and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

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.