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| Agenda item | 6 |
| Report no | HLC/068/19 |

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: THE HIGHLAND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 3 December 2019

Report title: Review of taxi tariff 2019/2020

Report by: The Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services

1. Purpose/Executive summary

- 1.1** This report relates to the statutory requirement to undertake, and complete, a review of the Council's taxi tariff within 18 months of the current tariff coming into effect.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1** This report invites the Committee to consider the information contained in the report and any further submissions made to the Committee by taxi operators attending the meeting and then agree a draft tariff for public consultation.

3. Background

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty in terms of Section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 ("1982 Act") to review its scales for the fares and other taxi related charges every 18 months. The current fare scales are attached for Members' information as **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The following information indicates the variations made to the tariff at the last six reviews:

2011/12:

Yardages for tariffs 1 and 2 decreased, giving approximately a 5% and 3% increase in fare income respectively. Tariff 3 permitted to be charged for vehicles carrying 5 passengers or more all day on Saturdays and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day.

2012/13:

Tariffs 2 and 3 to commence at 9.00pm instead of 10.00pm.

2014/15:

No change to tariffs.

2015/16:

A 50p increase to the cost of the initial yardage for tariff 1. A 30p increase to the cost of the initial yardages for tariffs 2 and 3.

The charge applied to compensate for the cost of the outward journey for hires which commence 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is the nearer) and where the customer wishes to travel further was increased from a maximum of £6.50 to a maximum of £8.00.

2016/2017:

The price of the first mile for tariff 1 was increased from £3.80 to £4.00 and the price per mile thereafter was increased from £1.40 to £1.80p.

The waiting time was increased from £18.00 per hour to £25.00 per hour.

The soiling charge increased from a maximum of £60.00 to a maximum of £100.00.

Provision for a charge was introduced where the customer is paying by debit or credit card (note, however, that surcharging for payments by debit or credit card subsequently became unlawful and is no longer practised).

The supplementary booking charge to compensate for the cost of the outward journey for hires commencing 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is nearer) was amended to reflect the actual cost, at the tariff applicable at the time, of travelling to pick up the customer.

2018/2019:

Tariff 1: no change to the running mile or flagfall.

Tariff 2: the running mile to be the tariff 1 running mile x 1.25. No change to the flagfall.

Tariff 3: the running mile to be the tariff 1 running mile x 1.5. No change to the flagfall.

The removal of Christmas Day and New Year's Day from tariff 3.

The introduction of a Tariff 4 which applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers at any time between 6.00pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00am on Boxing Day and between 6.00pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00am on 2 January. The running mile for tariff 4 to be the tariff 1 running mile x 2. The flagfall to be the same as tariff 3.

The introduction of a Tariff 5 which applies to vehicles carrying 5 or more passengers at any time between 6.00pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00am on Boxing Day and between 6.00pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00am on 2 January. The running mile for tariff 5 to be the to the new tariff 2 running mile x 2. The flagfall to be the same as tariff 3.

The booking fee to be increased from 50p to £1.

Airport car parking costs incurred may be charged on production of a receipt to the hirer.

4. Statutory process for reviewing the tariff

4.1 Section 17(3) of the abovementioned 1982 Act states that before the licensing authority fixes any scales or carries out any review it shall:

a) consult with persons or organisations appearing to it to be, or be representative of, the operators of taxis operating within its area.

b) following such consultation:

(i) review the existing scales, and

(ii) propose new scales (whether at altered rates or the same rates),

(c) publish notice of those proposed scales in a newspaper circulating in its area:

(i) setting out the proposed scales,

(ii) explaining the effect of the proposed scales,

(iii) proposing a date on which the proposed scales are to come into effect, and

(iv) stating that any person may make representations in writing until the relevant date, being one month after the date of the first publication of the notice, and

(d) consider such representations.

4.2 A copy of the proposed timescale for the review process is attached as **Appendix 2** of the report.

5. Representations from the taxi trade

5.1 In compliance with the pre-review consultation requirements set out in Section 17(3)(a) of the 1982 Act, in November 2019 the Highland Licensing Committee's Taxi/PHC Sub Group held meetings with the taxi/PHC trade in Fort William, Dingwall, Inverness and Wick. Invitations to these meetings were sent to all taxi and private hire car operators in Highland. At these meetings the trade were invited to provide the Sub Group with their initial views in relation to the review of the tariff. The trade were also advised that they could attend and address the meetings of the Highland Licensing Committee on 3 December and 18 February 2020.

5.2 A briefing note setting out what factors should be considered when reviewing the taxi tariff together with current inflation figures and costs was prepared and circulated to taxi operators with their invites to attend the Highland Licensing Committee's Taxi/PHC Sub Group meetings. A further version was circulated to trade representatives at each of the meetings with updated figures. A copy of the updated document is attached as **Appendix 3**.

5.3 Below are summarised details of the feedback received in relation to the taxi tariff consultation from each area. A copy of the full minutes for each meeting in the respective areas are attached as **Appendix 4**. The other non tariff related issues raised by the trade will be dealt with separately from this meeting.

5.4 Fort William

There was unanimous agreement from all the trade representatives that there should be no changes to any of the tariff amounts, the times when they take effect or any of the additional extras.

5.5 Dingwall

No trade representatives attended this meeting and no written submissions were received.

5.6 Inverness

Tariff 1:

Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA):

The Chairman of ITA advised they did not wish to see any change to tariff 1.

Radio companies and independent operators

The majority advised that there should be no changes to tariff 1

One operator suggested a 5% increase across tariff 1.

Sneckie Taxis

Sneckie Taxis advised that they wished the running mile to be increased from £1.80 to £2.20 with no change to the flagfall.

Written submission

A written submission was received from an independent operator who stated he would like to see Tariff 1 flagfall reduced back to £2.50

Tariff 2:

Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA):

The Chairman of ITA advised they did not wish to see any change to tariff 2.

Radio companies and independent operators

All advised that there should be no changes to tariff 2

Sneckie Taxis

Sneckie Taxis advised that they wished to see tariff 2 continue to be set at tariff 1 plus 25% for the running mile (based on their new proposal) with no change to the flagfall

Tariff 3:

Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA):

The Chairman of ITA advised they did not wish to see any change to tariff 3.

Radio companies and independent operators

All advised that there should be no changes to tariff 3

Sneckie Taxis

Sneckie Taxis advised that they wished to see tariff 3 continue to be set at tariff 1 plus 50% for the running mile (based on their new proposal) with no change to the flagfall

Tariff 4:

Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA):

The Chairman of ITA advised they did not wish to see any change to tariff 4.

Radio companies and independent operators

All advised that there should be no changes to tariff 4

Sneckie Taxis

Sneckie Taxis advised that they wished the running mile for tariff 4 to be retained as tariff 1 running mile (based on their new proposal) x 2.

Tariff 5:

Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA):

The Chairman of ITA advised they did not wish to see any change to tariff 5.

Radio companies and independent operators

All advised that there should be no changes to tariff 5.

Sneckie Taxis

Sneckie Taxis advised that they wished the running mile for tariff 5 to be retained as tariff 2 running mile (based on their new proposal) x 2.

Additional extras:

One operator proposed the booking fee be reduced back from £1.00 to 50p. The remaining operators indicated they did not wish this to be changed.

Sneckie Taxis proposed that the soiling charge be increased from a £100 maximum to a fixed fee of £120.

There were no suggestions to change the bridge tolls or ferry charges, any airport car parking charges, supplementary booking charges or waiting charge from any of the operators.

5.7 Wick

The operator's present both indicated that they did not wish to see any change to the flag fall, yardages or amounts of any of the tariffs.

Tariff 2:

One operator advised that in terms of the times in which the tariffs took effect he would like to see tariff 2 commence at 6.00pm on a Friday evening instead of 9.00pm.

The other operator agreed with this however he advised that he wished to see the tariff amended so that tariff 2 should start from 6.00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Effect of proposed tariffs

6.

6.1 A comparison of the current tariff compared with the effect of the proposed 5% increase to tariff 1 by one operator and the proposals put forward by Sneckie Taxis at the meeting are attached as **Appendix 5**.

7. Further written submission

7.1 An additional written submission from Sneckie Taxis was received after the conclusion of the meetings which is attached as **Appendix 6**.

7.2 This includes an additional proposal for an increase in the waiting time by 10%. In order to achieve this, the waiting time would require to be reduced from 10p for every 14 seconds to 10p for every 13 seconds. This would equate to £27.70 per hour instead of £25.70 an hour. It is not possible to get an exact 10% increase without going into fractions of seconds.

7.3 There is also a clarification that they are proposing an increase of 40 pence per mile on **every** mile travelled. In order to achieve a 40 pence increase on the calculated cost per additional mile and the actual cost for 1st mile, this would require a 10 pence increase to the flagfall (1st drop cost) for Tariffs 1 and Tariff 2. Tariffs 3 to 5 would not require an increase in flagfall (1st drop cost or 2nd drop cost) to achieve this proposal. The consequence of this would be a 10 pence increase to each of their proposed figures (for tariffs 1 and 2) as shown on **Appendix 6**.

8. Implications

8.1 The costs to the Council associated with the review of the taxi tariff in terms of outlays will be advertising costs only together with the staff time costs associated with the process, from pre-review consultations with the trade to conclusion. The Traffic Commissioner's costs in determining any appeal following adoption of a final tariff will also be borne by the Council, irrespective of the outcome of any such appeal.

8.2 The fee charged by the Trading Standards Service in relation to the checking and sealing of taxi meters requires to be met by operators. The cost for this, (excluding any new chip required from the meter manufacturer) is currently £68.52.

Date: 14 November 2019

Author: Claire McArthur

Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Copy of current tariff
Appendix 2 – Timescale for review
Appendix 3 – Taxi scale briefing note – including costs to be considered
Appendix 4 – Copies of the Minutes from each Sub Group meeting
Appendix 5 - Additional written submission from Sneckie Taxis
Appendix 6 – Effect of proposed tariffs

TAXI FARES

In accordance with the requirements of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Highland Council has reviewed the **maximum level** of charges for the hire of Taxis or Private Hire Cars fitted with Taxi Meters.

With effect from 19 November 2018, the maximum fares will be as follows:-

Tariff 1: Applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers, except when a higher tariff applies.

- For the first 785 yards or part; or £3.00
The initial period of waiting time of 119 seconds; or
A combination of time and distance as above
- For each additional 98 yards or part; or .10p
Each additional period of waiting time of 14 seconds; or
A combination of additional time and distance as above

General effect – the price of a hire £4.00 for the first mile plus £1.80 per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 2: Applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers on Good Friday, Easter Monday or May Day and, except when a higher tariff applies, between **9.00pm and 7.00am on any day** and all day on Saturday and Sunday. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, it also applies **at any time** of any day or night, except where a higher tariff applies.

- For the first 560 yards or part £ 3.30
The initial period of waiting time of 119 seconds; or
A combination of time and distance as above
- For each additional 78 yards or part .10p
Each additional period of waiting time of 14 seconds; or
A combination of additional time and distance as above

General effect – the price of a hire £4.90 for the first mile plus £2.30 per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 3: Applies between 6am and midnight on both Boxing Day and 2nd January. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, and except where Tariff 5 applies, it also applies between **9.00pm and 7.00am**, all day on Saturday and Sunday and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day.

- For the first 444 yards or part £ 3.90
The initial period of waiting time of 119 seconds; or
A combination of time and distance as above
- For each additional 65 yards or part .10p
Each additional period of waiting time of 14 seconds; or
A combination of additional time and distance as above

General effect – the price of a hire £6.00 for the first mile plus £2.70 per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 4: Applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers at any time between 6.00pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00am on Boxing Day and between 6.00pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00am on 2 January.

- For the first 444 yards or part; or £3.90
The initial period of waiting time of 119 seconds; or
A combination of time and distance as above
- For each additional 49 yards or part, or .10p
Each additional period of waiting time of 14 seconds; or
A combination of additional time and distance as above

General effect – the price of a hire: £6.60 for the first mile plus £3.60 per mile thereafter plus extras*

Tariff 5: Applies to vehicles carrying 5 or more passengers at any time between 6.00pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00am on Boxing Day and between 6.00pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00am on 2 January.

- For the first 444 yards or part; or £3.90
The initial period of waiting time of 119 seconds; or
A combination of time and distance as above
- For each additional 39 yards or part, or .10p
Each additional period of waiting time of 14 seconds; or
A combination of additional time and distance as above

General effect – the price of a hire: £7.30 for the first mile plus £4.50 per mile thereafter plus extras*

***Extra Charges**

- Booking ahead e.g. by telephone £1.00
- Any bridge tolls or ferry charges, where applicable.
- Any airport car parking charges (Only chargeable on production of a receipt to the hirer)

In addition, a supplementary booking charge may be applied to compensate for the cost of the outward journey for hires which commence 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is the nearer). The maximum charge shall be the actual cost at the tariff which applies at the time of travelling between the starting location of the taxi or the location of the taxi base (as the case may be) and the pick-up point or drop-off point, whichever is the closer to the taxi or taxi base. This booking charge is in addition to the fare chargeable at the appropriate tariff for the journey from the pick-up point to the drop-off point. This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of booking.

When a taxi (or a private hire car fitted with a taxi meter) is called but not used, a charge shall be allowed as if it had been occupied from the time it left the stance or garage.

Soiling Charge – maximum of £100.00 payable by an offending passenger, where a vehicle requires to be removed from service for cleaning in order for it to be restored to a usable state and condition.

Appendix 2

| Action | Timetable 2019/20 |
|---|--------------------------------|
| The Council to consult/meet with persons or organisations appearing to be representative of operators of taxis within its area. | Early November 2019 |
| The Highland Licensing Committee will consider the representations received and agree a draft tariff. | HLC – 03/12/19 |
| The draft tariff will be publicised in the P&J (Highland Edition) and on the Council's website inviting the public to submit comments/representations in relation to the draft tariff within 28 days. | December 2019/ January 2020 |
| Deadline for submissions. | Mid January 2020 |
| The Highland Licensing Committee will meet to consider the results of the public consultation, and agree a final tariff. | HLC – 18/2/20 |
| Any revised fare scale would then come into effect, subject to no appeal to the Traffic Commission being made by the trade. | Late April 2020 |

The Highland Council

Taxi fare scales review 2019

In terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Council as Licensing Authority is required to review the maximum fares that taxis operating within The Highland Council may charge and to set scales. The 1982 Act requires that this should be within 18 months beginning with the date on which the scales came into effect.

The fares approved by the Council are maximum fares which may be charged. Taxi operators are able to discount these rates if they wish. Whilst it is obligatory to review fare levels periodically, there is no obligation to alter the existing fares.

The Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities issued in April 2012 states that authorities are advised as best practice to pay regard to advice contained in paragraphs 2.34-2.37 of Scottish Department Circular 25/1986. This 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 a standard of the licensing authority, of employing drivers and the prevalent 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.”

Current scales – with effect from 19 November 2018

Tariff 1 (applies to vehicles carrying 4 passengers, except when a higher tariff applies)

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Flagfall (first 785 yards) | £3.00 |
| Mileage | £1.80 |
| | |
| Examples: | |
| 1 mile journey | £4.00 |
| 2 mile journey | £5.80 |
| 3 mile journey | £7.60 |
| 4 mile journey | £9.40 |
| 5 mile journey | £11.20 |
| 6 mile journey | £13.00 |
| 7 mile journey | £14.80 |
| 8 mile journey | £16.60 |
| 9 mile journey | £18.40 |
| 10 mile journey | £20.20 |

Tariff 2 (applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers on Good Friday, Easter Monday or May Day and, except when a higher tariff applies, between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am on any day and all day on Saturday and Sunday. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, it also applies at any time of any day or night, except where a higher tariff applies.)

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Flagfall (first 560 yards) | £3.30 |
| Mileage | £2.30 |
| | |
| Examples: | |
| 1 mile journey | £4.90 |
| 2 mile journey | £7.20 |
| 3 mile journey | £9.50 |
| 4 mile journey | £11.80 |
| 5 mile journey | £14.10 |
| 6 mile journey | £16.40 |
| 7 mile journey | £18.70 |
| 8 mile journey | £21.00 |
| 9 mile journey | £23.30 |
| 10 mile journey | £25.60 |

Tariff 3 (applies between 6.00 am and midnight on both Boxing Day and 2nd January. When 5 or more passengers are being carried, and except where Tariff 5 applies, it also applies between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am, all day on Saturday and Sunday and on Good Friday, Easter Monday and May Day.)

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Flagfall (first 444 yards) | £3.90 |
| Mileage | £2.70 |
| | |
| Examples: | |
| 1 mile journey | £6.00 |
| 2 mile journey | £8.70 |
| 3 mile journey | £11.40 |
| 4 mile journey | £14.10 |
| 5 mile journey | £16.80 |
| 6 mile journey | £19.50 |
| 7 mile journey | £22.20 |
| 8 mile journey | £24.90 |
| 9 mile journey | £27.60 |
| 10 mile journey | £30.30 |

Tariff 4 (applies to vehicles carrying up to 4 passengers at any time between 6.00 pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00 am on Boxing Day and between 6.00 pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00 am on 2 January.)

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Flagfall (first 444 yards) | £3.90 |
| Mileage | £3.60 |
| | |
| Examples: | |
| 1 mile journey | £6.60 |
| 2 mile journey | £10.20 |
| 3 mile journey | £13.80 |
| 4 mile journey | £17.40 |
| 5 mile journey | £21.00 |
| 6 mile journey | £24.60 |
| 7 mile journey | £28.20 |
| 8 mile journey | £31.80 |
| 9 mile journey | £35.40 |
| 10 mile journey | £39.00 |

Tariff 5 (applies to vehicles carrying 5 or more passengers at any time between 6.00 pm on Christmas Eve and 6.00 am on Boxing Day and between 6.00 pm on New Year's Eve and 6.00 am on 2 January.)

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Flagfall (first 444 yards) | £3.90 |
| Mileage | £4.50 |
| | |
| Examples: | |
| 1 mile journey | £7.30 |
| 2 mile journey | £11.80 |
| 3 mile journey | £16.30 |
| 4 mile journey | £20.80 |
| 5 mile journey | £25.30 |
| 6 mile journey | £29.80 |
| 7 mile journey | £34.30 |
| 8 mile journey | £38.80 |
| 9 mile journey | £43.30 |
| 10 mile journey | £47.80 |

Extra charges:

| | |
|---|--|
| Booking ahead i.e. by telephone | £1.00 |
| Soiling charge | £100.00 maximum |
| Any bridge tolls or ferry charges, where applicable | Actual cost |
| Any airport car parking charges | Actual cost (only chargeable on production of a receipt to the hirer) |
| Supplementary booking charge for outward journey which commence 3 miles or more away from the taxi or taxi base (whichever is the nearer) | Actual cost at the tariff which applies at the time of travelling between the starting location of the taxi or the location of the taxi base (as the case may be) and the pick up point or drop off point, whichever is the closer to the taxi or taxi base. (This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of the booking.) |
| Called but not used | Charge will be the amount as if it had been occupied from the time it left the stance or garage. |

Considerations for fixing a taxi tariff

In light of the above guidance, we have provided figures supplied by the Government's Office of National Statistics (ONS). The main index is the Consumer Price Index which is a measure of consumer price inflation produced to international standards.

The main index is the CPI (all items). However, we have also included other statistics which may be relevant to the taxi tariff fare review, namely 'purchase of vehicles', 'maintenance and repairs', 'petrol' and 'diesel'.

The ONS publishes regular updates on these statistics. To allow comparison between relevant times, the ONS gives figures as indices, meaning that the figures are stated relative to a stated base year or month. The base year or month always has a value of 100 so other times have values which are greater or less than 100 to show how they compare i.e. the implementation of the current taxi scale (November 2018) to the most recent figures (September 2019) which were released on 16 October 2019.

Comparative figures have also been provided for fuel between November 2018 and September 2019 (most recent figures) based on the AA fuel reports.

Figures for changes in weekly earnings have also been obtained from the ONS and figures provided for the changes to the National Minimum Wage.

****It is open to anyone participating in the review process to suggest that the Licensing Committee should consider other factors****

Inflation figures (Consumer Price Index)

| | Index name | Start | End | Change |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1 | ALL ITEMS | 107.0 | 108.5 | 1.4% |
| | CPI Index 00 (2015=100) | | | |
| | Series: D7BT | | | |
| 2 | PURCHASE OF VEHICLES (all) | 104.1 | 103.6 | -0.5% |
| | CPIH Index 07.1 | | | |
| | Series: L543 | | | |
| | PURCHASE OF NEW CARS | 109.5 | 112.6 | 2.8% |
| | CPIH Index 07.1.1A | | | |
| | Series: L544 | | | |
| | PURCHASE OF SECOND HAND CARS | 96.0 | 90.6 | -6% |
| | CPIH Index 07.1.1B | | | |
| | Series: L545 | | | |
| 3 | MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS | 108.5 | 110.8 | 2.1% |
| | CPI Index 07.2.3 | | | |
| | Series: D7ED | | | |
| 4 | PETROL | 115.5 | 114.7 | -0.7% |
| | CPI Index 97.2.2.2 | | | |
| | Series ID: L7FP | | | |
| 5 | DIESEL | 118.7 | 114.6 | -3.6% |
| | CPI Index 07.2.2.21 | | | |
| | Series ID: L7FO | | | |

Source – Office for National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk)

Indicators are published monthly

START – November 2018

END – September 2019

AA fuel report

September 2019

| | Unleaded (litres) | Diesel (litres) | Super Unleaded (litres) | LPG (litres) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Scotland | 127.6 | 131.5 | 138.8 | 52.7 |
| UK average | 127.7 | 131.4 | 139.9 | 63.3 |
| Supermarket average | 124.0 | 127.8 | 130.8 | 54.4 |

November 2018

| | Unleaded (litres) | Diesel (litres) | Super Unleaded (litres) | LPG (litres) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Scotland | 127.0 | 136.2 | 136.4 | - |
| UK average | 127.5 | 135.9 | 138.1 | 69.5 |
| Supermarket average | 123.5 | 132.4 | 128.8 | 55.9 |

Percentage change between two periods:

| | Unleaded (litres) | Diesel (litres) | Super Unleaded (litres) | LPG (litres) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Scotland | 0.5% | -3.6% | 1.7% | n/a |
| UK average | 0.2% | -3.4% | 1.3% | -9.8% |
| Supermarket average | 0.4% | -3.6% | 1.5% | -2.8% |

Earnings

Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) – % changes in average earnings
(whole economy)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| August 2019 (latest figure) | 3.6% |
| November 2018 | 3.4% |
| Change | 0.2% |

Based on the information above, we have produced how the fares would change for different percentages across all tariffs compared with the current scale:

please note that the figures shown would be required to be rounded up/down to the nearest 10 pence to accord with the taxi meters

Tariff 1

| | Current | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Flagfall | £3.00 | £3.02 | £3.03 | £3.05 | £3.06 | £3.08 | £3.09 |
| Mileage | £1.80 | £1.81 | £1.82 | £1.83 | £1.84 | £1.85 | £1.85 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 mile | £4.00 | £4.02 | £4.04 | £4.06 | £4.08 | £4.10 | £4.12 |
| 2 miles | £5.80 | £5.83 | £5.86 | £5.89 | £5.92 | £5.95 | £5.97 |
| 3 miles | £7.60 | £7.64 | £7.68 | £7.71 | £7.75 | £7.79 | £7.83 |
| 4 miles | £9.40 | £9.45 | £9.49 | £9.54 | £9.59 | £9.64 | £9.68 |
| 5 miles | £11.20 | £11.26 | £11.31 | £11.37 | £11.42 | £11.48 | £11.54 |
| 6 miles | £13.00 | £13.07 | £13.13 | £13.20 | £13.26 | £13.33 | £13.39 |
| 7 miles | £14.80 | £14.87 | £14.95 | £15.02 | £15.10 | £15.17 | £15.24 |
| 8 miles | £16.60 | £16.68 | £16.77 | £16.85 | £16.93 | £17.02 | £17.10 |
| 9 miles | £18.40 | £18.49 | £18.58 | £18.68 | £18.77 | £18.86 | £18.95 |
| 10 miles | £20.20 | £20.30 | £20.40 | £20.50 | £20.60 | £20.71 | £20.81 |

Tariff 2

| | Current | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Flagfall | £3.30 | £3.32 | £3.33 | £3.35 | £3.37 | £3.38 | £3.40 |
| Mileage | £2.30 | £2.31 | £2.32 | £2.33 | £2.35 | £2.36 | £2.37 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 mile | £4.90 | £4.92 | £4.95 | £4.97 | £5.00 | £5.02 | £5.05 |
| 2 miles | £7.20 | £7.24 | £7.27 | £7.31 | £7.34 | £7.38 | £7.42 |
| 3 miles | £9.50 | £9.55 | £9.60 | £9.64 | £9.69 | £9.74 | £9.79 |
| 4 miles | £11.80 | £11.86 | £11.92 | £11.98 | £12.04 | £12.10 | £12.15 |
| 5 miles | £14.10 | £14.17 | £14.24 | £14.31 | £14.38 | £14.45 | £14.52 |
| 6 miles | £16.40 | £16.48 | £16.56 | £16.65 | £16.73 | £16.81 | £16.89 |
| 7 miles | £18.70 | £18.79 | £18.89 | £18.98 | £19.07 | £19.17 | £19.26 |
| 8 miles | £21.00 | £21.11 | £21.21 | £21.32 | £21.42 | £21.53 | £21.63 |
| 9 miles | £23.30 | £23.42 | £23.53 | £23.65 | £23.77 | £23.88 | £24.00 |
| 10 miles | £25.60 | £25.73 | £25.86 | £25.98 | £26.11 | £26.24 | £26.37 |

Tariff 3

| | Current | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Flagfall | £3.90 | £3.92 | £3.94 | £3.96 | £3.98 | £4.00 | £4.02 |
| Mileage | £2.70 | £2.71 | £2.73 | £2.74 | £2.75 | £2.77 | £2.78 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 mile | £6.00 | £6.03 | £6.06 | £6.09 | £6.12 | £6.15 | £6.18 |
| 2 miles | £8.70 | £8.74 | £8.79 | £8.83 | £8.87 | £8.92 | £8.96 |
| 3 miles | £11.40 | £11.46 | £11.51 | £11.57 | £11.63 | £11.69 | £11.74 |
| 4 miles | £14.10 | £14.17 | £14.24 | £14.31 | £14.38 | £14.45 | £14.52 |
| 5 miles | £16.80 | £16.88 | £16.97 | £17.05 | £17.14 | £17.22 | £17.30 |
| 6 miles | £19.50 | £19.60 | £19.70 | £19.79 | £19.89 | £19.99 | £20.09 |
| 7 miles | £22.20 | £22.31 | £22.42 | £22.53 | £22.64 | £22.76 | £22.87 |
| 8 miles | £24.90 | £25.02 | £25.15 | £25.27 | £25.40 | £25.52 | £25.65 |
| 9 miles | £27.60 | £27.74 | £27.88 | £28.01 | £28.15 | £28.29 | £28.43 |
| 10 miles | £30.30 | £30.45 | £30.60 | £30.75 | £30.91 | £31.06 | £31.21 |

Tariff 4

| | Current | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Flagfall | £3.90 | £3.92 | £3.94 | £3.96 | £3.98 | £4.00 | £4.02 |
| Mileage | £3.60 | £3.62 | £3.64 | £3.65 | £3.67 | £3.69 | £3.71 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 mile | £6.60 | £6.63 | £6.67 | £6.70 | £6.73 | £6.77 | £6.80 |
| 2 miles | £10.20 | £10.25 | £10.30 | £10.35 | £10.40 | £10.46 | £10.51 |
| 3 miles | £13.80 | £13.87 | £13.94 | £14.01 | £14.08 | £14.15 | £14.21 |
| 4 miles | £17.40 | £17.49 | £17.57 | £17.66 | £17.75 | £17.84 | £17.92 |
| 5 miles | £21.00 | £21.11 | £21.21 | £21.32 | £21.42 | £21.53 | £21.63 |
| 6 miles | £24.60 | £24.72 | £24.85 | £24.97 | £25.09 | £25.22 | £25.34 |
| 7 miles | £28.20 | £28.34 | £28.48 | £28.62 | £28.76 | £28.91 | £29.05 |
| 8 miles | £31.80 | £31.96 | £32.12 | £32.28 | £32.44 | £32.60 | £32.75 |
| 9 miles | £35.40 | £35.58 | £35.75 | £35.93 | £36.11 | £36.29 | £36.46 |
| 10 miles | £39.00 | £39.20 | £39.39 | £39.59 | £39.78 | £39.98 | £40.17 |

Tariff 5

| | Current | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Flagfall | £3.90 | £3.92 | £3.94 | £3.96 | £3.98 | £4.00 | £4.02 |
| Mileage | £4.50 | £4.52 | £4.55 | £4.57 | £4.59 | £4.61 | £4.64 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 mile | £7.30 | £7.34 | £7.37 | £7.41 | £7.45 | £7.48 | £7.52 |
| 2 miles | £11.80 | £11.86 | £11.92 | £11.98 | £12.04 | £12.10 | £12.15 |
| 3 miles | £16.30 | £16.38 | £16.46 | £16.54 | £16.63 | £16.71 | £16.79 |
| 4 miles | £20.80 | £20.90 | £21.01 | £21.11 | £21.22 | £21.32 | £21.42 |
| 5 miles | £25.30 | £25.43 | £25.55 | £25.68 | £25.81 | £25.93 | £26.06 |
| 6 miles | £29.80 | £29.95 | £30.10 | £30.25 | £30.40 | £30.55 | £30.69 |
| 7 miles | £34.30 | £34.47 | £34.64 | £34.81 | £34.99 | £35.16 | £35.33 |
| 8 miles | £38.80 | £38.99 | £39.19 | £39.38 | £39.58 | £39.77 | £39.96 |
| 9 miles | £43.40 | £43.62 | £43.83 | £44.05 | £44.27 | £44.49 | £44.70 |
| 10 miles | £47.80 | £48.04 | £48.28 | £48.52 | £48.76 | £49.00 | £49.23 |

Taxi/PHC Sub Group Meeting

Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Ft William

Friday 1 November 2019 at 11.00am

Present:

Councillor Andrew Jarvie – Chair
Claire McArthur, Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Iain Meredith, Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Mike Elsey, Senior Licensing Officer
Julie Traynor, Administrative Assistant, Licensing
Angus MacFarlane, Gus's Taxis, Portree
Jamie Blackburn, West Highland Taxis
Jim McCourt, Jim's Taxis
Scott Easson, Elecar
Nina Easson, Elecar
George MacDougall, Greyhound Taxis
Peter McIntyre, Levenside
Alan Hendrie, Alan's Taxis
Joe Coughlin, Deadline Taxis
Donald Nicolson, Taxi Operator
Sandy Gray, Gus's Taxis
Colin MacLeod, Cloudy's Taxis

1. Apologies – None

2. Taxi Tariff Consultation

Claire McArthur, Principal Solicitor, summarised the tariff review procedure and advised that the meetings which the Sub Group were holding in the various areas of Highland would provide the trade with an opportunity to provide initial feedback.

An open discussion took place after which there was unanimous agreement from all the trade representatives present that there should be no change to the tariff amounts, the times when they take effect or any of the additional extras.

The reasons put forward for this were:

- Any increase to the daytime tariff (T1) may have the effect that some of the public no longer use taxis/PHC or they reduce the number of times they do use them.
- There is already evidence that some people are no longer using taxis/PHC following the last tariff rise.

- Customers were only just getting used to the changes to the current tariff
- This is a rural community which doesn't have the luxury of public transport and a lot of the customers relied on taxi services for shopping and hospital appointments
- The major supermarkets were now offering shopping delivery services at a rate either equal to, or cheaper, than the cost of a taxi/PHC. Any increase in the tariff may see more people using this type service instead of taxis/PHC's.
- With the numbers of taxis/PHC's increasing a status quo was preferred to try and ensure that the public continued to use taxis and that there was still a sufficient amount of work for all.
- Very few, if any, operators use the advance booking charge.
- Although it was appreciated that the tariff was the maximum amount which could be charged most operators did charge what was on the meter.

3. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) – List of Designated Vehicles

Iain Meredith, Licensing Solicitor, advised that the Council were in the process of commencing work on compiling a list of designated vehicles under Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010.

The Act places a number of requirements on the drivers of designated vehicles including:

- carrying a passenger whilst in their wheelchair;
- not making any additional charge for doing so;
- if the person chooses to sit in a passenger seat, to carry the wheelchair;
- to take such steps as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- to give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required.

Section 165(7) of the Act creates an offence where the driver of a designated taxi or private hire vehicle fails to comply with a duty imposed upon them under the section.

During discussion operators asked if a policy could be adopted by the Council to the effect that any new licences issued be conditioned so that the operator requires to provide a WAV. It was explained that there were a number of reasons why a policy of this nature could not be considered/adopted, which included.

- A blanket policy such as this, which effectively would be a 'back door' way of creating a restriction in numbers, would not in itself be reason to introduce this.
- It may lead to a decline in the provision of taxi/PHC services in rural areas, where there is currently little, or no, public transport, with taxis/PHC numbers reducing or disappearing altogether.

Comments were made by taxi operators that the cost of purchasing and maintaining a WAV was high.

4. Taxi/PHC Guidance Notes – Reviewing and updating

Iain Meredith advised that a review and update of the taxi and PHC guidance notes would be undertaken shortly with sections such as the dress code etc. being updated.

The trade asked whether a driver who wore a kilt would be in breach of the current dress code. It was noted that a number of drivers wore a kilt particularly if they were carrying out tours and although the dress code did not make mention of kilts it was confirmed that no driver would be reported for a breach conditions if they did wear one.

5. Issues which the trade wish to raise.

CCTV – It was noted that the Council do not have a policy in relation to CCTV in licensed vehicles. It is up to the operators own discretion if they wish to install these. If they do they would require to ensure that they comply with the relevant legislation including data protection requirements and that appropriate notices are displayed in and/or on the vehicle.

Door Stewards – Operators advised that on a number of occasions door stewards from licensed premises in Ft William have been escorting people from the premises who were extremely intoxicated and putting them into taxis. Often the driver is unable to establish where the customer wishes to go due to their condition, however, they then have to take on the duty of care in relation to the individual. The feeling was that the stewards were passing their responsibilities onto the taxi drivers by removing them from licensed premises and placing the individual onto the duty of care of the drivers. Claire McArthur advised that it would be difficult to tie this to the remit of a liquor licence as the incident was happening off the licensed premises, however, she would pass on the information to the Licensing Standards Officer who could advise premises in the area of good practice in relation to such instances.

Coaches parking on taxi ranks – Operators advised that coaches/buses parking on taxi ranks was often an issue in Ft William. They were advised to contact Shane Manning, HC Principal Traffic Officer, to see if there were any restrictions that could be put in place to prevent this. This would include improved rank signage which the operators advised was currently inadequate.

Electric cars – One operator had asked whether the Council would consider any grants for the purchase of an electric vehicle to be used as a taxi. Advice was provided to the operator that this would be a matter for the Scottish Government to consider and not a licensing matter.

Taxi Driver's Knowledge Tests – One operator suggested that the pass marks for the knowledge test be increased to try and improve standards citing an example of one new driver who did not know where the Ben Nevis Hotel was. It was noted that whilst the Highland wide pass mark had been reduced to 75%, the local area test pass mark remained at 85% which it was felt was sufficiently high. It was also noted that at the last round of Sub Group meetings held in 2018 meetings with operators in the Caithness area suggested that the pass marks be reduced as they were finding it extremely difficult to recruit drivers as the pass marks were putting them off applying.

Restriction of Numbers – Following comments in relation to the restriction of numbers and capping of licences the Principal Solicitor referred to Counsels opinion which had been sought in relation to this issue. Upon a query being raised it was confirmed that any survey of unmet demand must be carried out by an independent party and cannot rely on feedback from either the trade or licensing officers as to whether there has been any drop in taxi use.

Taxi/PHC Sub Group Meeting

Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

Thursday 7 November 2019 at 11.00am

Present:

Councillor Liz MacDonald – Chair
Claire McArthur, Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Iain Meredith, Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Mike Elsey, Senior Licensing Officer
Andrew MacDonald, Inverness Taxi Alliance
Jordan Baird, City Taxis
Artur Nowak, Inverness Taxis
Gary Johnson, Happy Cabbies Taxis
Richard Mann, Independent
Steven Cairns, Independent
Nigel Nicholson, City Taxis
Les Steven, Inverness Taxis
Bill Cowan, Independent
James Miller, City Taxis
Chris McEwan, Inverness Taxis
Richard King, Northern Accident Management
Mhairi Moffat, Independent
Raymond Munro, Sneckie Taxis
Andrea Paul, Sneckie Taxis
Wosciech Kobialka, Inverness Taxis
Jamie Fraser, Inverness Taxis

2. Apologies – Cllr Andrew Jarvie

2. Taxi Tariff Consultation

The Chair advised that they would go through each tariff individually and invite the trade representatives present to provide their views on each one.

Tariff 1: The Inverness Taxi Alliance (ITA) advised that they did not wish to see any rise in tariff 1. The radio companies represented at the meeting also confirmed that they did not wish any change to this tariff as did all the independent operators who were in attendance. They stated that the previous tariff increase led to a lot of people no longer using taxis and any further increase would be extremely detrimental to the trade.

One taxi operator suggested a 5% increase across tariff 1.

Sneckie Taxis advised that the structure of the tariff was good but wish to see the running mile for tariff 1 increased to £2.20 with no change to the flag fall. The reason for this was at the last review they had proposed a £2.00 running mile with the final decision of the Committee, following 6 minor objections received, being to increase it to £1.80 for the running

mile. They advised that as they employ their drivers there are increasing costs associated with this, including a potential increase in the minimum wage to £10.00. They also advised that the decision to agree a £1.80 running mile rather than a £2.00 at the last review cost their company a 6 figure sum and that even with this rise Highland's tariff 1 would still be 27% less than Moray Council's taxi tariff.

The issue of discounting was discussed with some operators stating that the rise requested by Sneckie Taxis was only to offset the 10% discount they offered. Sneckie Taxis responded that they do not offer blanket discounts but do offer regular customers loyalty discounts.

One operator stated that the taxi operators in Ft William did not wish an increase either as there had also been a reduction in the numbers of locals using taxis in that area as well.

It was noted that the issue of operators offering different discounts only served to cause confusion for the public. It was also stated that Moray Council had recently frozen their rates for 18 months.

The ITA advised that drivers were making more money 7 years ago compared to today and that any increase in the tariff would be a huge blow to the trade. One operator advised that his average earnings were down 30% due to the public being put off using taxis due to the high tariffs.

There was a difference of opinion amongst the trade in relation to running a viable business and the best way to be cost effective. It was noted amongst the operators that it was a personal choice as to how an operator chooses to structure their business.

Some operators advised that an increase in the tariff would not result in an increase in wages.

Operators cited the cost of the meter test as a factor in relation to any change to the tariff. A small rise would, in effect, take a long time to recoup the fee for the meter change, however, Sneckie taxis disputed this and advised that they should be able to recoup the cost in a short period of time.

Tariff 2: Sneckie taxis wished to see tariff 2 continue to be set at tariff 1 plus 25% for the running mile with no change to the flag fall.

The ITA, the radio companies and the independent operators present all advised that they did not wish an increase on tariff 2 for the reasons previously stated.

Tariff 3: Sneckie taxis wished to see tariff 3 continue to be set at tariff 1 plus 50% for the running mile with no change to the flag fall.

The ITA, the radio companies and the independent operators present all advised that they did not wish an increase on tariff 3 for the reasons previously stated.

Tariff 4: Sneckie taxis advised that they would wish the running mile for tariff 4 to be retained as tariff 1 x 2.

The ITA, the radio companies and the independent operators present all advised that they did not wish an increase on tariff 4.

Tariff 5: Sneckie taxis advised that they would wish the running mile for tariff 5 to be retained as tariff 2 x 2.

The ITA, the radio companies and the independent operators present all advised that they did not wish an increase on tariff 5. A number of operators stated that they did not use this tariff..

Extras

Booking ahead charge: There was a proposal by one operator that this charge be reduced to 50p. The remaining operators indicated that they would be happy for it to remain at £1.00.

Soiling charge: There was a proposal by Sneckie Taxis that the charge be increased to £120 and that this be a fixed amount regardless of the nature or level of soiling. It was noted that the current tariff allowed for an amount up to £100 to be charged meaning that if the soiling was not significantly bad then a lower fee could be charged with potentially more chance of receiving payment. All others present were happy that the amount and wording of this part of the tariff remain as is.

Any bridge tolls or ferry charges: It was unanimously agreed that there be no change to this.

Any airport car parking charges: One operator felt that he was unable to ask for the cost of parking to be refunded by the customer as the fare charged was already high. It was noted that this was discretionary and if a driver did not wish to charge this they did not require to.

Supplementary booking charge - It was unanimously agreed that there be no change to this.

Called but not used charge - It was unanimously agreed that there be no change to this. A number of operators commented that it was seldom used.

One operator advised there were a number of operators who don't attend these meetings, however they had produced an on-line survey to which 100 operators had responded. The results of which were that 94% advised that they wished to see no increase, 3% indicated that they did want an increase and 3% weren't sure.

One operator referred to the guidance document which had been circulated with the agenda and noted that a number of costs including diesel, petrol and the purchase price of vehicles had overall reduced giving further reason for requesting no increase.

3. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) – List of Designated Vehicles

Iain Meredith, Licensing Solicitor, advised that the Council were in the process of commencing work on compiling a list of designated vehicles under Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010. This list would be published on the Council's website and available for viewing by the public.

The Act places a number of requirements on the drivers of designated vehicles including:

- carrying a passenger whilst in their wheelchair;
- not making any additional charge for doing so;
- if the person chooses to sit in a passenger seat, to carry the wheelchair;
- to take such steps as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and

- to give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required.

Section 165(7) of the Act creates an offence where the driver of a designated taxi or private hire vehicle fails to comply with a duty imposed upon them under the section.

Sneckie Taxis advised that the implementation of this and the additional requirements may result in operators deciding not to continue to operate their WAV and substitute it with a normal saloon type vehicle.

It was clarified that, as operators should already be carrying out the above under their already existing duties under the Equalities Act 2010. The only real difference to drivers once this is implemented is that any failure to comply with these requirements would be an offence under the Act and drivers liable to a criminal conviction rather than it being pursued as a civil matter as it is now.

During discussion operators raised the issue that it could take 2 or 3 times longer to transfer a person in a wheelchair in and out of the vehicle without recompense. Officers explained that, as detailed in Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010, it is an offence to make any additional charge for carrying a passenger in their wheelchair and they should start the meter at the same point as they would for any other passenger.

It was suggested that taxi firms work collaboratively with a view to improving the customer availability of WAV and that if one firm does not have one available then the run could be passed onto another one. The companies present advised that this already happens in practice now.

It was noted that there was a lack of suitable ranks for the picking up and dropping off of people in wheelchairs as almost all had kerbs which had to be negotiated. A query was raised as to whether a dedicated rank could be provided for WAV's or dropped kerbs in current ranks. Suggestions were put forward for Union Street and outside the Ivy restaurant on Church Street. Officers advised that they would contact Shane Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, with a view to him considering this.

Sneckie Taxis asked why the Council were introducing the requirements of Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010 if it was not mandatory. The Licensing Solicitor explained that although it was not a statutory requirement there was a duty on the Council to ensure that it takes its equalities duties seriously and does not leave the Council open to any unnecessary risk of legal challenge.

It was clarified that Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010 did not place a requirement on operators to provide WAV's.

It was also explained that introducing a new policy requiring all new applicants for a taxi operator's licence to provide a WAV could not be used as a back-door way of creating a restriction in numbers which was not what this legislation was intended for.

It was noted that a report in relation to this would be presented to the Highland Licensing Committee at its meeting on 3 December 2019 inviting Members to consider the implementation of a designated list. The report would be available in the week prior to the meeting.

4. Taxi/PHC Guidance Notes – Reviewing and updating

Iain Meredith advised that a review and update of the taxi and PHC guidance notes would be undertaken shortly with sections such as the dress code etc. being updated. A review of the licence conditions would follow in the new year.

5. Issues which the trade wish to raise.

Meter Testing – Operators advised that they felt the meter test fee was too high in relation to the time taken to check and seal the meter. Officers explained that the fee is set to recover all the costs incurred to undertake this process which includes all aspects of carrying out the tests and delivering this function Highland wide. Northern Accident Management advised that he was aware that in at least one other Council the taxi meter agents sealed the meters without the requirement for Officers to check them. It was noted that by doing this there would be no checks carried out that the meters were in fact calibrated to the correct tariff. Some operators were aware of issues regarding the meter having been recalibrated and having the incorrect tariff. Notwithstanding this Officers advised that they would consult Trading Standards on this proposal.

Zoning – The issue of zoning and capping numbers was raised and the Principal Solicitor referred to the information note that was circulated to operators' at the last taxi tariff review consultation. This took into account the Counsel's opinion sought on this matter. Operators were reminded that the wording of the 1982 Act is such that the assessment of unmet demand requires the Council to look at demand for taxi services in the whole of the Council's area. This means the grounds for refusal of a licence in terms of demand cannot be used to create a cap on the number of taxi licences which will be granted solely for Inverness. It can only be used to create a cap on the overall number of taxi licences which will be granted in Highland. The Principal Solicitor also referred to Scottish Government guidance which has made it clear that any overprovision assessment would need to be evidenced and applied for the benefit of the public and not for restricting trade or competition amongst taxi operators. One operator raised the issue that if zoning was introduced those Inverness operators who currently ply for hire in Invergordon when the cruise ships are in would no longer be able to do so.

Inspections – Sneckie Taxis raised an issue which occurred in October this year whereby they had been advised that Riverford Garage would not be open and that they would require to present their vehicle for inspection earlier or remove the plate until the vehicle has been inspected. Officers advised that they would look into this issue.

It was noted that Riverford were the only contracted garage in the area that could carry out inspections of long wheel base vehicles and Sneckie Taxis advised that this meant a 30 mile round trip for their larger vehicles.

Sneckie Taxis advised that they had been told that they should not turn up for inspections until 10 minutes before they were due at the Inverness MOT centre, which they advise was not convenient for them. Officers advised that they would look into the reasons for this.

Penalty Point System – Sneckie Taxis advised that they recently received a letter from Trading Standards advising them that they had accrued 12 penalty points. There was no indication as to what these points were for nor were there any details of a right of appeal. There was a request that this be more transparent and Officers advised that they would contact Trading Standards with this feedback and ask what could be done to improve this.

Taxi spaces in Station Square – A query was raised as to whether the spaces in station square were now available for any taxi driver to use. The Inverness Taxis representative advised that this was not the case and that they still held the contract with Scotrail for the use of these.

PHC's plying for hire – It was noted that should any operators witness a PHC picking up a passenger who has not been pre-booked then they can report this to the Council.

Temporary taxi ranks – It was noted that the recent temporary taxi ranks which were set up during the Academy Street re-surfacing works were not notified to the trade. Officers agreed to raise this with Shane Manning in relation to any future temporary rank proposals.

Infrastructure, zoning and pollution – The ITA stated that they are currently raising concerns with these matters with their Trade Union representative but did not wish to discuss these further at this meeting.

Taxi/PHC Sub Group Meeting

Wick Chambers, Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street,
Wick, KW1 4AJ

Friday 8 November 2019 at 11.00am

Present:

Councillor Andrew Jarvie – Chair
Councillor Andrew Sinclair, Wick and East Caithness Ward
Claire McArthur, Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Iain Meredith, Solicitor – Regulatory Services
Mike Eley, Senior Licensing Officer
Brian Travers – Jimmy's Taxis
Hugh MacDonald – Hugh's Taxis

3. Apologies – None

2. Taxi Tariff Consultation

The Senior Licensing Office summarised the tariff review procedure and advised that the meetings which the Sub Group were holding in the various areas of Highland would provide the trade with an opportunity to provide initial feedback.

The operator's present both indicated that they did not wish to see any change to the flag fall, yardages or amounts of any of the tariffs.

One operator advised that in terms of the times in which the tariffs took effect he would like to see tariff 2 commence at 6.00pm on a Friday evening instead of 9.00pm. He stated that many other professions receive overtime or additional payment for working in the evenings and would wish to be able to charge this on a Friday evening only.

The other operator was in agreement with this however he advised that he would wish to see the tariff amended so that tariff 2 should start from 6.00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

There were no other changes requested to the tariff by those present.

3. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) – List of Designated Vehicles

Iain Meredith, Licensing Solicitor, advised that the Council were in the process of commencing work on compiling a list of designated vehicles under Section 165 of the Equalities Act 2010.

The Act places a number of requirements on the drivers of designated vehicles including:

- carrying a passenger whilst in their wheelchair;
- not making any additional charge for doing so;
- if the person chooses to sit in a passenger seat, to carry the wheelchair;

- to take such steps as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- to give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required.

Section 165(7) of the Act creates an offence where the driver of a designated taxi or private hire vehicle fails to comply with a duty imposed upon them under the section.

One operator asked whether there were any training courses e.g. moving and handling, which drivers could attend. Officers advised that there were no formal training courses in terms of licensing however they would be happy to sign-post drivers to relevant courses should they wish to attend any.

It was noted that Caithness Rural Transport currently provided a WAV Service within the area. Officers advised that they would check that there were no licensing requirements in respect of this activity.

4. Taxi/PHC Guidance Notes – Reviewing and updating

Iain Meredith advised that a review and update of the taxi and PHC guidance notes would be undertaken shortly with sections such as the dress code etc. being updated.

There were no comments from the operators present in relation to this issue.

5. Issues which the trade wish to raise.

Unlicensed taxis operating in Wick – The operators present advised that they were aware of several vehicles which were being used regularly as unlicensed taxis picking up people in the evenings and weekends in Wick. One person in particular had been doing this for the last 20 years. The frustration of the operators was that they had no point of contact to report it to and found that they were being passed from Licensing to Trading Standards to Police Scotland without getting any resolution. It was noted that Police Scotland were responsible for the enforcement of unlicensed taxis and PHC's and HC officers would contact Police Scotland to make them aware of the issues. Officers would also provide a contact list for taxi operators which would help them get in touch with the correct people.

Enforcement – Operators stated that it had been a number of years since Trading Standards Officers had been to the Caithness area to carry out any enforcement of licensed vehicles and drivers. Both operators present advised that they would welcome Trading Standards officers carrying out regular enforcement of their, and other, vehicles and drivers to ensure that they were complying with the licence conditions. Officers advised that they would speak to Trading Standards Officers with regard to this.

Taxi rank signage – Operators advised that there had still been no additional signage or line painting carried out in relation to the taxi rank in Wick. Officers advised that they would raise this again with Shane Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, with a view to action being taken regarding this.

APPENDIX 5

Effect of proposals:

Please note that the figures shown would be required to be rounded up/down to the nearest 10 pence to accord with the taxi meters

Tariff 1- 5% increase proposal

| | Existing Tariff 1 | Proposed Tariff 1 | % Increase |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 785 | 785 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 98 | 93 | 5.1% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.00 | £3.00 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £1.80 | £1.89 | 5.4% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £4.00 | £4.10 | 2.5% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £5.80 | £6.00 | 3.4% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £7.60 | £7.90 | 3.9% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £9.40 | £9.80 | 4.3% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £11.20 | £11.70 | 4.5% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £20.20 | £21.10 | 4.5% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £29.20 | £30.60 | 4.8% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £38.20 | £40.10 | 5.0% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £56.10 | £59.00 | 5.2% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £74.10 | £77.90 | 5.1% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £92.00 | £96.80 | 5.2% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £181.80 | £191.50 | 5.3% |
| Average Increase over 1 -100 Miles | | | 4.5% |

Tariff 1 - Sneckie Taxis proposal

| | Existing Tariff 1 | Proposed Tariff 1 | % Increase |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 785 | 785 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 98 | 80 | 18.4% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.00 | £3.00 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £1.80 | £2.20 | 22.5% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £4.00 | £4.30 | 7.5% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £5.80 | £6.50 | 12.1% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £7.60 | £8.70 | 14.5% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £9.40 | £10.90 | 16.0% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £11.20 | £13.10 | 17.0% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £20.20 | £24.10 | 19.3% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £29.20 | £35.10 | 20.2% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £38.20 | £46.10 | 20.7% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £56.10 | £68.10 | 21.4% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £74.10 | £90.10 | 21.6% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £92.00 | £112.10 | 21.8% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £181.80 | £ 222.10 | 22.2% |
| Average Increase over 1 - 100 Miles | | | 17.8% |

Tariff 2:**Sneckie Taxis proposal**

| | Existing Tariff 2 | Proposed Tariff 2 | % Increase |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 560 | 560 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 78 | 64 | 17.9% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.30 | £3.30 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £2.26 | £2.75 | 21.9% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £4.90 | £5.20 | 6.1% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £7.10 | £8.00 | 12.7% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £9.40 | £10.70 | 13.8% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £11.70 | £13.50 | 15.4% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £13.90 | £16.20 | 16.5% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £25.20 | £30.00 | 19.0% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £36.50 | £43.70 | 19.7% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £47.80 | £57.50 | 20.3% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £70.30 | £85.00 | 20.9% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £92.90 | £112.50 | 21.1% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £115.50 | £140.00 | 21.2% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £228.30 | £277.50 | 21.6% |
| Average Increase over 1 - 100 Miles | | | 17.4% |

Tariff 3:**Sneckie Taxis proposal**

| | Existing Tariff 3 | Proposed Tariff 3 | % Increase |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 444 | 444 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 65 | 53 | 18.5% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.90 | £3.90 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £2.71 | £3.32 | 22.6% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £6.00 | £6.40 | 6.7% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £8.70 | £9.80 | 12.6% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £11.40 | £13.10 | 14.9% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £14.10 | £16.40 | 16.3% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £16.80 | £19.70 | 17.3% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £30.30 | £36.30 | 19.8% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £43.90 | £52.90 | 20.5% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £57.40 | £69.50 | 21.1% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £84.50 | £102.70 | 21.5% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £111.60 | £135.90 | 21.8% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £138.70 | £169.20 | 22.0% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £274.00 | £335.20 | 22.3% |
| Average Increase over 1 - 100 Miles | | | 18.1% |

Tariff 4:**Sneckie Taxis proposal**

| | Existing Tariff 4 | Proposed Tariff 4 | % Increase |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 444 | 444 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 49 | 40 | 18.4% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.90 | £3.90 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £3.59 | £4.40 | 22.5% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £6.60 | £7.20 | 9.1% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £10.20 | £11.60 | 13.7% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £13.80 | £16.00 | 15.9% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £17.40 | £20.40 | 17.2% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £21.00 | £24.80 | 18.1% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £39.00 | £46.80 | 20.0% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £56.90 | £68.80 | 20.9% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £74.90 | £90.80 | 21.2% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £110.80 | £134.80 | 21.7% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £146.70 | £178.80 | 21.9% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £182.60 | £222.80 | 22.0% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £362.20 | £442.80 | 22.3% |
| Average Increase over 1 - 100 Miles | | | 18.7% |

Tariff 5:

Sneckie Taxis proposal

| | Existing Tariff 5 | Proposed Tariff 5 | % Increase |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st Drop (Yds) | 444 | 444 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop (Yds) | 39 | 32 | 17.9% |
| 1st Drop Cost | £3.90 | £3.90 | 0.0% |
| 2nd Drop Cost | £0.10 | £0.10 | 0.0% |
| Calculated Cost per additional Mile | £4.51 | £5.50 | 21.9% |
| Actual Cost for 1st Mile | £7.30 | £8.10 | 11.0% |
| Actual Cost for 2 Miles | £11.80 | £13.60 | 15.3% |
| Actual Cost for 3 Miles | £16.40 | £19.10 | 16.5% |
| Actual Cost for 4 Miles | £20.90 | £24.60 | 17.7% |
| Actual Cost for 5 Miles | £25.40 | £30.10 | 18.5% |
| Actual Cost for 10 Miles | £47.90 | £57.60 | 20.3% |
| Actual Cost for 15 Miles | £70.50 | £85.10 | 20.7% |
| Actual Cost for 20 Miles | £93.10 | £112.60 | 20.9% |
| Actual Cost for 30 Miles | £138.20 | £167.60 | 21.3% |
| Actual Cost for 40 Miles | £183.30 | £222.60 | 21.4% |
| Actual Cost for 50 Miles | £228.50 | £277.60 | 21.5% |
| Actual Cost for 100 Miles | £454.10 | £552.60 | 21.7% |
| Average Increase over 1 - 100 Miles | | | 18.9% |

Workings for the proposed changes

Sneckie Taxis - Proposal

T1 – Running mile: **£2.20**

T2 – Running mile: T1 (£2.20) + 25% = **£2.75**

T3 – Running mile: T1 (£2.20) + 50% = **£3.30**

T4 – Running mile: T1 (£2.20) x 2 = **£4.40**

T5 - Running mile: T2 (£2.75) x 2 = **£5.50**

Change to the tariff to obtain increases

T1 – Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 98 yards to 80 yards.

T2 - Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 78 yards to 64 yards.

T3 – Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 65 yards to 53 yards.

T4 – Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 49 yards to 40 yards.

T5 – Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 39 yards to 32 yards.

Taxi operator

5% increase in tariff 1

Retain the initial yardage but reduce the additional yardage from 98 yards to 93 yards

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 November 2019 14:28
To: Michael Elsey; Claire McArthur
Subject: Taxi Tariff review

Mike

Regarding the meeting with the trade on Thursday last week when we stated we were asking for an increase from 1.80 per mile to 2.20 per mile, I may have incorrectly stated we are not looking for an increase on the flag fall, after discussing this with someone who does meter calibrations he has told me an increase in the flag fall may well be required as well in order to achieve an increase of 40p per mile on every mile travelled which is what we are asking for.

As stated we would like to see the tariff go up a further 10% from the £2 per mile that was proposed and consulted upon in the 2018 review to £2.20 per running mile for T1, (but ultimately was not implemented in 2018 because the then licensing committee chairman proposed a motion to keep T1 at 1.80 per mile) and 25% above that for the subsequent T2 & 25% above T2 for T3.

We also would like to see waiting time increased by 10% as well as the soiling charge go up to a mandatory £120 charge.

Hope all the above makes sense.

Regards

Raymond