

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Governance Officer
to Regulatory Panel (Licensing)
of 31 October 2024**

Subject: Review of metered taxi fares

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Regulatory Panel's approval to review metered fares for taxis and propose a new fare scale.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

- 2.1.1 reviews the existing scales for metered fares for taxis, as detailed in Appendix 1;**
- 2.1.2 proposes new maximum scales for fares, as detailed in Appendix 2;**
- 2.1.3 instructs officers to advertise the proposed scales in a newspaper circulating in the local authority area;**
- 2.1.4 in the event of there being no adverse representations received, grants delegated authority to the Service Lead, Legal and Licensing, to fix the scales as proposed and give notice of the scales and date of commencement of the scales, in a newspaper circulating in the local authority;**
- 2.1.5 in the event of there being adverse representations received, instructs officers to bring back a further report to Panel, to consider those representations.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is obliged under section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and section 14 of the Transport Act 1985 to fix maximum fare scales and to review these scales at regular intervals. The current fare card is annexed – Appendix 1. Whilst obliged to carry out a review, the Council is not obliged to increase (or decrease) maximum fares.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The taxi trade has been impacted by the ongoing cost of living crisis. They have advised of significant increase of costs for insurance, road tax and general maintenance for their vehicles. A particular issue has been the availability and increase in costs of parts for the vehicles. The cost of new vehicles has also increased significantly. All of the above factors contribute to the increased costs of operating as a taxi and the majority of the trade request an increase in the fares to keep the fleet sustainable. As part of the fare review process, there has been consultation with all licensed operators and the responses received are shown in Appendix 3.
- 4.2 It is noted that the consultation responses contain two responses which are not in favour of an increase and six responses which request an increase in the fares. Of these six responses, only three detail any figures, one of which is slightly different than the other two, with the other responses requesting an overall increase. The proposed fare structure, contained in Appendix 2, is based on the responses from Richard Colville and Ayr Premier Taxis. Richard Colville's response is on behalf of the Taxi Owners Association which was submitted after consultation with Thistle Cabs, Ayr Premier Taxis, Citadel Taxis and Cowan's Taxis. Therefore, it is considered the proposed fare scale represents the majority of consultation responses. In addition, the proposed scale includes an additional charge under Additional Charge 3 (Waiting) of £28.50 for 6-8 passenger vehicles. It should be noted that this is not a new charge but simply adding the current waiting charge for 6-8 passenger vehicles as the waiting charge is based on the tariffs, which increases for passenger numbers.
- 4.3 One of the responses received from the consultation details a suggestion regarding the passenger numbers for the tariffs. Currently Tariffs 1 and 2 are applicable for up to 5 passengers and Tariffs 3 and 4 are applicable for 6 – 8 passengers. The response from Streamline (contained in Appendix 3 in full) suggests the passenger numbers are amended to up to 4 passengers for Tariffs 1 and 2 and 5-8 passengers for Tariffs 3 and 4. However, it is noted that no other response suggested an increase and it is recommended that this suggestion requires further consideration and discussion with the Taxi and Private Hire Operators Forum and should not be part of the current proposed fare scale.
- 4.4 In terms of the legislation, the proposed fare scale requires to be advertised in the local newspaper for one month. Any person may comment on the proposed scale, and in fixing a new fare scale, the licensing authority must consider any representations.
 - 4.4.1 If no adverse representations are received officers are seeking delegated authority to fix the scales for the fares, and to give notice of the scales in an advertisement in the local newspaper. The new scales will come in effect 7 days after this advertisement.

- 4.4.2 If any adverse representations are received then the proposed scales will require to be referred back to the Regulatory Panel for further consideration.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

If the recommendations are rejected the licensed taxi trade will continue to suffer financial difficulties and South Ayrshire may lose some operators as their business remains or becomes unsustainable

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. The overall impact has been assessed as low and therefore a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as Appendix A

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 4 of the Council Plan: Make the most of the local economy

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 The Portfolio Holder for Buildings, Housing and Environment, Councillor Martin Kilbride, has been consulted and is supportive of the report.

Background Papers : none

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Date: 25th October 2024

**South Ayrshire Council
Equality Impact Scoping Assessment**

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. FSD Guidance for Public Bodies in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

1. Policy details

Policy Title	Review of metered taxi fares
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Laura McChristie – Co-ordinator – Licensing – laura.mcchristie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk Karen Briggs – Service Lead – Legal and Licensing – karen.briggs@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	Low – girls and boys may be less likely to use a taxi due to increased cost. There is a free bus travel scheme that under 22's are entitled to so alternative transport is available. Also free bus travel scheme is available for age 60+.	No impact

Disability	Low – disabled people may be less likely to use a taxi due to cost. There is a free bus travel scheme that disabled people are entitled to so alternative transport is available. Some disabled people are also entitled to a blue badge which can assist with parking.	No impact
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	No impact	No impact
Marriage or Civil Partnership	No impact	No impact
Pregnancy and Maternity	No impact	No impact
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	No impact	No impact
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	No impact	No impact
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	No impact	No impact
Sexual Orientation – person’s sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	No impact	No impact
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children’s Rights	No impact	No impact

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	Low - taxis become slightly more expensive. Other potential transport options are available such as free bus schemes for age under 22 and 60+.	Low– Taxi drivers are able to increase their earnings, to help their families.
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet	Low – taxis become slightly more expensive.	Low – taxi drivers able to increase earnings to help

Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future		their families. Also assist with meeting increases in car costs.
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	Low – taxis become slightly more expensive.	Low – taxi drivers able to increase earnings to help their families. Also assist with meeting increases in car costs and viability of taxi firms as local employers.
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	Low – taxis become slightly more expensive.	Low – taxi drivers able to increase earnings to help their families. Also assist with meeting increases in car costs and viability of taxi firms as local employers.
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	Low – taxis become slightly more expensive.	Low – taxi drivers able to increase earnings to help their families. Also assist with meeting increases in car costs and viability of taxi firms as local employers.

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No Impact
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	No Impact
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	No impact

Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	No impact
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	No impact
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	No impact
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	No impact

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: In assessing the impact of the decision required to be taken by elected members on this report, to carry out a review of metered taxi fares, the overall impact has been assessed as Low.	
Signed :Karen Briggs..... Service Lead Date:25.10.24.....	

Current Fare Card

With effect from 1st May 2022 the maximum fares and charges are as follows:

Journeys made within South Ayrshire

Tariff 1

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds - £3.60
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20

Tariff 2

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. £4.80
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20

Tariff 3

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. £5.40
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30

Tariff 4

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. £7.20
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30

Christmas and New Year

For journeys beginning after 9pm until midnight on 24 and 31 December, and from 6am until midnight on 25 and 26 December, and 1 and 2 January, and for journeys beginning after midnight until 6am on 25, 26, 27 December, and on 1, 2, 3 January.

All fares will be subject to a surcharge of fare plus 50%.

Additional charges

Where a taxi has been arranged, but not used by the hirer, the applicable tariff will apply. Waiting time (per hour) is £18.00.

Soiling Charge - a fee is chargeable for any soiling which necessitates a taxi being removed from service for cleaning. £60.00

Journeys made outwith South Ayrshire

Such a fare, prior to the acceptance of the hire, as may be proposed to the hirer and accepted by him.

Proposed Fare Card

With effect from xxx the maximum fares and charges are as follows:

Journeys made within South Ayrshire

Tariff 1

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds - **£4.00**
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20

Tariff 2

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. **£5.00**
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20

Tariff 3

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. **£6.00**
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30

Tariff 4

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

- (1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. **£7.50**
- (2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30

Christmas and New Year

For journeys beginning after 9pm until midnight on 24 and 31 December, and from 6am until midnight on 25 and 26 December, and 1 and 2 January, and for journeys beginning after midnight until 6am on 25, 26, 27 December, and on 1, 2, 3 January.

All fares will be subject to a surcharge of fare plus 50%.

Additional charges

Where a taxi has been arranged, but not used by the hirer, the applicable tariff will apply. Waiting time (per hour) is £18.00 **for up to 5 passengers, £28.50 for 6-8 passengers**
Soiling Charge - a fee is chargeable for any soiling which necessitates a taxi being removed from service for cleaning. **£70.00**

Journeys made outwith South Ayrshire

Such a fare, prior to the acceptance of the hire, as may be proposed to the hirer and accepted by him.

Responses to consultation

James Cowan

In my opinion I don't think this is need. What was sought by the trade was an increase to the age limit to the age of 15 years to bring it in line with many other parts of the country. Having failed to do this you may as well have put a noose around many operators necks, having a price increase you may as well kick the stool from under them and reuse them for the rest of us. Since the cost of living crisis trade is down and many that rely on taxis during the day ie. The older generation would struggle with an increase cutting them off from society. With the trade at night/weekend continuing to decrease a price increase a price increase would not only cause a decline for us but also be a danger for the public with a number of young vulnerable girls choosing to walk home at night already rather than paying for a taxi, an increase would surely cause an increase in this.

Hugh Cowan

My opinion the meters should not be going up in price.

Graham's Taxis – Graham McIntyre

Many thanks for getting in touch prior to the meeting in October. My thoughts are as follows:

It's been 2 and a half years since the last taxi tariffs review, and I would encourage an increase to keep in line with the substantial increase in operating costs over that period.

Insurance and road tax have increased and general taxi maintenance has been rendered more expensive as a direct result of the sizeable cost increase in vehicle parts. This has noticeably increased the cost of vehicles themselves, giving major cost considerations when upgrading fleet vehicles.

Based on the above, I believe that an increase of around 12% would help bring us in line (with North Ayrshire, for example) and help us maintain profitability in this difficult economic climate.

Hopefully the TOA will be in touch to give a more in depth justification for an increase but I wanted to make the above points, and really appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Chic Cunningham

Yes, I think the taxi tariff should go up. No increase since 2022 increased running costs. South Ayrshire employees have had two pay rises since 2022.

Troon Cabs - Graham Moffat

I would support a rise in fares. Firstly to help with future rises in minimum wage for my office staff. Also to help with general rises in cost of living.

George Wilkie – Streamline (suggested amendments and comments in bold and underlined)

Tariff 1

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

(1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds.

£3.60 (**Extra £0.40p on the current rate, new starting rate would be £4.00**)

(2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20 (**We would like to see this figure increased to £0.21**)

Tariff 2

For up to 5 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

(1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds.

£4.80 (**Extra £0.40p on the current rate, new starting rate would be £5.20**)

(2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.20 (**We would like to see this figure increased to £0.23**)

Tariff 3

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight

(1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds.

£5.40 (**Extra £0.40p on the current rate, new starting rate would be £5.80**)

(2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30 (**we believe this should increase in line with whatever tariff 1 is decided to be. Tariff 3 should be 50% more than Tariff 1**)

Tariff 4

For 6-8 passengers - journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am

(1) For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or a waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds.

£7.20 (**Extra £0.40p on the current rate, new starting rate would be £7.60**)

(2) For each additional and subsequent 130.4 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 40 seconds or part thereof. £0.30 (**we believe this should increase in line with whatever tariff 2 is decided to be. Tariff 4 should be 50% more than Tariff 2**)

Christmas and New Year

For journeys beginning after 9pm until midnight on 24 and 31 December, and from 6am until midnight on 25 and 26 December, and 1 and 2 January, and for journeys beginning after midnight until 6am on 25, 26, 27 December, and on 1, 2, 3 January.

All fares will be subject to a surcharge of fare plus 50%.

Additional charges

1. Where a taxi has been arranged, but not used by the hirer, the applicable tariff will apply.

2. Waiting time (per hour) is £18.00

3. Soiling Charge - a fee is chargeable for any soiling which necessitates a taxi being removed from service for cleaning. £60.00. **We would like to see this increased, but only during a particular time during the night, as in many cases, especially at the weekend.**

drivers will have to end their shifts early, as there is nowhere available at that time of night to get the vehicle cleaned, sanitised & dried. Essentially, drivers have to finish work early.

This is obviously going to have a massive impact on the drivers earnings, especially during busy event weekends. What we are asking for is an increase to the soiling charge between the hours of 00:00 - 06:00, during this time it is near impossible for drivers to have access to facilities that will allow them to clean the car and get back on the road again. We believe in a charge that is fair for both for the customers and the driver.

We would also look to put forward the suggestion that Tariff 1 + Tariff 2 is 'For up to 4 passengers' only. Our fleet is made up a mixture of 8 seaters and 4 seaters. We would like to see that if a customer calls and books a taxi for 5 pax, that they are charged either Tariff 3 + Tariff 4.

The way our fleet is organised it is nether fuel efficient or environmentally friendly to offer a 5-seater taxi at Tariff 1 + Tariff 2 rates. We believe that anyone booking a 5 seater taxi, is wholly aware that it is a larger than usual taxi and therefore the higher tariff should apply, as trips with 5 passengers can not be accommodated using normal cars, that run on the lower rate.

I have noticed that other local authorities in Scotland, use a higher than standard tariff when 5 or more passengers are transported. I think it's something to consider, as most taxis can either carry a maximum of 4 pax or the larger capacity of 8 pax. It's very rare to come across a taxi / PH that can carry 5 passengers as its maximum.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our review of the current taxi fares.

Ayr Premier Taxis

We would like an increase as follows

Rate 1 start £4.00

Rate 2 start £5.00

10p per mile increase.

Richard Colville, on behalf of the Taxi Owners Association and in consultation with Ayr Premier, Thistle Cabs, Cowans Taxis and Citadel Taxis prior to submitting the proposal below.

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and Transport Act 1985

METERED FARES FOR TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE CARS

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2024



JOURNEYS MADE WITHIN SOUTH AYRSHIRE

TARIFF 1

For up to 5 passengers - Journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight.

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| (1) | For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. | £4.00 |
| (2) | For each additional and subsequent 125.7 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 39.1 seconds or part thereof. | £0.20 |

TARIFF 2

For up to 5 passengers - Journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am.

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| (1) | For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. | £5.00 |
| (2) | For each additional and subsequent 125.7 yards, or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 37.9 seconds or part thereof. | £0.20 |

TARIFF 3

For 6 - 8 passengers - Journeys beginning after 6.00am until midnight.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| (1) | For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. | £6.00 |
| (2) | For each additional and subsequent 125.7 yards or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 37.9 seconds or part thereof. | £0.30 |

TARIFF 4

For 6 - 8 passengers - Journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| (1) | For a distance not exceeding 1100 yards, or waiting time not exceeding 280 seconds. | £7.50 |
| (2) | For each additional and subsequent 125.7 yards or part thereof, or additional waiting time of 37.9 seconds or part thereof. | £0.30 |

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR PERIOD

For Journeys beginning after 9.00pm until midnight on 24 & 31 December, and from 6.00am until midnight on 25 & 26 December and 1 & 2 January, and for Journeys beginning after midnight until 6.00am on 25, 26 & 27 December, and on 1, 2 & 3 January.

ALL FARES WILL BE SUBJECT TO A SURCHARGE OF FARE PLUS 50%

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| (1) | Where a taxi has been arranged, but not used by the hirer, the applicable tariff will apply. | |
| (2) | Waiting time (per hour) £19.00 for up to 5 Passengers. £28.50 for 6 - 8 Passengers | |
| (3) | Soiling Charge – a fee is chargeable for any soiling which necessitates a taxi being removed from service for cleaning. | |
- £70.00

JOURNEYS MADE OUTWITH SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Such a fare, prior to the acceptance of the hire, as may be proposed to the hirer and accepted by him.