



TAXI LICENSING: REVIEW OF FARES

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to review the current level of fares for taxi and private hire car licensing (where appropriate) in the Western Isles.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 It is the duty of a licensing authority to set the scales for fares and other related charges for the hire of taxis, in terms of section 17 the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. Before the licensing authority carries out any review, it requires to consult with persons or organisations who are representative of the operators of taxis operating within their area, and to advertise its intentions with regard to the review, giving persons one month to make representations thereon, and further to consider any such representations duly made. An increase in the fares would necessitate a change to the meters which would then require to be tested. The cost of this would be borne by the taxi and private hire car operators.
- 2.2 In terms of the statutory duty detailed above to review fares on a periodic basis, the Licensing Officer has carried out the initial consultation required, and the responses are summarised in Paragraphs 6.2 to the Report.
- 2.3 In reviewing taxi fares, Members are invited to consider the responses received and whether they wish to keep the scale of maximum fares at the same level to satisfy the respondents, having regard to the low level of response to the proposed review from consultees, and determine the level of fares to propose in the public advertisement. The present fare structure came into effect on 5 September 2022, and it should be noted that there was an increase on that date, mainly due to the wishes of the consultees in that review.
- 2.4 The Comhairle's proposal will require to be advertised formally, detailing the proposal and inviting representations. Operators will be written to again and any representations received reported back. In the event that no relevant representations are received, the Comhairle may wish to authorise an effective date at the end of July 2025 to keep the taxi fare structure at the same levels. A later effective date may be required if necessary, taking into consideration any changes to the meters which could then be required, based on any representations received being reported back to and considered by Members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:

- (1) **determine, in terms of section 17 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and in light of the initial consultation responses, whether or not to propose to keep the existing level of taxi fares; and**
- (2) **in the event that no relevant representations are received, authorise the Chief Executive to implement the fares for taxi and private hire car licensing.**

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Appendix: None
Background Papers: None

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	None
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	All taxi and private hire car operators in the Western Isles. All respondents wanted fare rates to stay at the level they are currently set at.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 In terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the licensing authority, before it carries out any review, is required to consult with persons or organisations who appear to be, or are representative of, the operators of taxis operating within their area. A letter was thus circulated to all taxi operators and private hire car operators asking them for their comments.

FARES, TARIFFS AND FUEL PRICE TRENDS

- 6.1 It is proposed to maintain the practice of applying the same rates to taxis and private hire cars where they are fitted with taxi meters. Private hire cars not fitted with taxi meters are not bound to follow the fare structure. The current rates of maximum fares in the Western Isles took effect on 5 September 2022 and are as follows:

Maximum Fares by Distance and Time:

Tariff 1

For the first 1320 yards (3/4 mile) or part thereof	£4.00
For each additional 440 yards (1/4 mile)	£0.60
For each minute of waiting time or part thereof	£0.45

Tariff 2

Surcharge on all rates if hire is between 9pm and 7am from Monday to Thursday	25%
Surcharge on all rates if hire is between 9pm on Friday and 7am on Monday	25%
Surcharge on all rates on public holidays determined by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	25%

Tariff 3

Surcharge on all rates on hiring 25/26 December and 1/2 January	50%
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Extras

Cleaning charge (in the event of a passenger fouling the Taxi/private hire car)	£50
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When carrying 5 or more passengers the normal start-off rate will be tariff 2.

When carrying 5 or more passengers between midnight and 7am Monday to Thursday, between midnight on Friday and 7am on Monday and public holidays including 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January, tariff 3 will apply.

A supplementary booking charge of up to £6.50 can be charged 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 the customer wishes to travel further away. This charge may only be demanded if the customer is informed of the amount of the charge at the time of booking.

- 6.2 In relation to fares, 3 responses in total were received to the consultation process. All 3 responses were from taxi operators, and they wished the taxi fares to be unchanged.

There were no other proposals to amend the fare tariff structure.

- 6.3 For background information, fuel price reports in Scotland (source – www.theaa.com) show an decrease from September 2022 (the last time there was a taxi fares review) as follows:

Unleaded	12% decrease
Diesel	16% decrease

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 There was a tariff increase at the completion of the previous review of taxi fares for the Western Isles on 5 September 2022. The fuel prices in Scotland and the Western Isles have been fluctuating but the current prices are much lower compared to the levels at the time of the last review. All respondents to the consultation wished taxi fares to remain unchanged.