

**Wiltshire Council**

**Licensing Committee**

**28 May 2012**

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**Increase of Taxi Tariff – South Zone**

**Executive Summary**

This report considers the responses to the proposed increase of the taxi tariff in the South area of Wiltshire Council following public consultation. It informs Members of the changes in the current tariff and the main reasons for objection to those changes.

**Proposal**

The Licensing Committee consider the objections and implement a new taxi tariff to take effect within two months from 5 April 2012, with a recommended implementation date of 7 June 2012.

**Reason for Proposal**

This is a statutory requirement for the Council.

**Maggie Rae**

**Corporate Director of Public Health and Public Protection**

**Wiltshire Council**

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## **Increase of Taxi Tariff – South Zone**

### **Purpose of Report**

To consider taxi tariff (fare) rise for implementation in the South Zone following public consultation.

### **Background**

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows Councils to set the fares for hackney carriages (taxis). These are the fares for journeys that are not booked in advance. This enables the customer to know the maximum fare that they can be charged for any journey in a licensed taxi irrespective of whether they flag a taxi down in the street or use a taxi rank.

The arrangements for journeys booked in advance are different as the customer can negotiate a maximum fare.

The current tariff is attached at Appendix A.

A rise in the taxi tariff was requested by the taxi trade in March 2011 due to the increase in fuel, insurance and vehicle running costs and there had been no increase in tariff since August 2008. This was the first requested rise from the trade in the South since Wiltshire Council was formed in April 2009.

A proposed tariff was circulated to all proprietors in June 2011, attached at Appendix B. A number of objections were received from the trade concerning the loss of extras and the extra night time tariff. A petition of 46 signatories requested that the tariff be left as it is.

The letters of objection are attached as Appendix C.

Due to the number of objections received by Wiltshire Council this tariff was not advertised as the advertising cost which is borne by the trade would be in the region of £850. A letter was again sent to all proprietors with a pro-forma attached asking for proprietors' views on an increase in tariff, the existing 3 tariff structure, extras and the night time tariff. The letter and Pro-forma are attached at Appendix D.

110 letters were sent and 44 replies were received of these 84% wanted a tariff increase. 89% wanted to keep the 3 tariff structure. Half of those who replied were in favour of having no extras on the tariff. 80% did not wish to have an extra night time tariff.

The pro-forma replies are attached as Appendix E.

The multi seat tariff is in use in the other 3 zones of Wiltshire Council, but was unpopular with the South Zone trade. To try and progress the matter another tariff proposal was sent to the trade in the same 3 tariff format currently in use. As a step towards harmonising the tariff no extras were included apart from a soiling charge. No objections were received from the trade so the tariff was advertised in the Salisbury Journal on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

The second proposed tariff is attached as Appendix F.

25 objections have been received from the trade against the proposed tariff.

The letters of objection and correspondence are attached as Appendix G.

### **Key differences between the existing and proposed tariff**

The current South Zone tariff has `extras` that are added to the meter fare at the driver's discretion. Some drivers do use them which can lead to conflict with passengers when they get charged more than a driver who chooses not to use the `extras`. The other 3 Wiltshire Council Zones do not use the extras system as the five tariff system allows drivers of vehicles licensed for more than four passengers to charge more. The use of an `extras` button is not best practice as it is not transparent to the travelling public. It can be confusing to both elderly passengers and those who are the worse for wear through the consumption of alcohol. It is hoped that in the future there will be one tariff to cover the whole of Wiltshire council's regulated area, removing the practice of using an extras button will be a step towards this one tariff. The removal of the extras led to objections being received to the proposed tariff from the members of the trade that use the extras.

### **Options**

After consideration of the consultation responses officers have proposed the following modified tariff:-

<b>Tariff One</b> 6am to 10pm	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£2.80</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>20p</b>	Waiting time for each 48 seconds (=£15 per hour) <b>20p</b>
<b>Tariff Two</b> 10pm to 6am and on all Public Holidays with the exception of those covered by Tariff 3	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£3.90</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>30p</b>	Waiting time for each 60 seconds (=£18 per hour) <b>30p</b>

<b>Tariff Three</b> Christmas Day and New Years Day	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£5.60</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>40p</b>	Waiting time for each 60 seconds (=£24 per hour) <b>40p</b>
<b>Soiling Charge</b> – where the taxi or seating is soiled or defecated by any passenger or animal, which necessitates cleaning before the vehicle can be used again for public hire			<b>£100</b>
<b><u>Mileage Charges</u></b>			
	1 <sup>st</sup> Mile	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mile	Each sub mile
<b>Tariff One</b> 6am to 10pm £2.80 + £1.80	£4.60	£6.60	£2.00
<b>Tariff Two</b> 10pm to 6am £3.90 + £2.70	£6.60	£9.60	£3.00
<b>Tariff Three</b> Christmas Day and New Years Day £5.60 + £3.60	£9.20	£13.20	£4.00

### TRADE PROPOSAL FOR TAXI TARIFF INCREASE – SALISBURY

<b>Tariff One</b> 6am to 10pm	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£3.20</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>20p</b>	Waiting time for each 48 seconds (=£15 per hour) <b>20p</b>
<b>Tariff Two</b> 10pm to 6am and on all Public Holidays with the exception of those covered by Tariff 3	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£4.50</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>30p</b>	Waiting time for each 60 seconds (=£18 per hour) <b>30p</b>

<b>Tariff Three</b> Christmas Day and New Years Day	First 352 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>£6.00</b>	Each subsequent 176 yards (1/10 <sup>th</sup> of a mile or 161m) or part thereof <b>40p</b>	Waiting time for each 60 seconds (=£24 per hour) <b>40p</b>
<b>SURCHARGES</b>			<b>40p</b>
<b>'Fuel Surcharge' per journey</b>			<b>60p</b>
<b>For use of the boot</b>			<b>60p</b>
<b>For each dog or other animal carried at the discretion of the driver</b> (no charge for guide dogs/hearing and certain other assistance dogs Under DDA 1995)			<b>60p</b>
<b>For each person carried in excess of one</b>			<b>60p</b>
<b>Soiling charge</b> - whether taxi or seating is soiled or defecated by any passenger or animal, which necessitates cleaning before the vehicle can be used again for public hire.			<b>£100</b>
<b><u>Mileage Charges</u></b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Mile	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mile	Each sub mile
<b>Tariff One</b> 6am to 10pm £3.20 + £1.60	£4.80	£6.80	£2.00
<b>Tariff Two</b> 10pm to 6am £4.50 + £2.40	£6.90	£9.90	£3.00
<b>Tariff Three</b> Christmas Day and New Years Day £6.00 + £3.20	£9.20	£13.20	£4.00

The modified tariff proposed by officers would make the two mile cost on tariff one £6:60

The modified tariff proposed by the trade with the extras for two miles on tariff one £7:80

If the modified tariff proposed by officers was implemented, the South area of Wiltshire council would be the fourth highest two mile tariff one in the country.

If the modified tariff proposed by the trade was implemented, the South area of Wiltshire council would be the most expensive two mile tariff one in the country by fifty pence. (Source Private Hire and Taxi Monthly)

Currently the two mile tariff one cost throughout the North, West and East areas of Wiltshire council is £6:00 (59<sup>th</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> position nationally).

The Licensing Committee now needs to determine the new tariff to come into effect on or before the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

This must be one of the following:

- a. The tariffs as advertised for consolation, or;
- b. As existing, or;
- c. Any modified tariff between the two.

Any tariff change will need to come into operation on or before the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

### **Environmental Impact**

There is minimal environmental impact of these proposals.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The impact of these proposals is assessed as 'low' against the Council statutory responsibilities.

### **Risk Assessment**

If an increase in the maximum tariff rate cannot be agreed, the Council could be open to legal challenge by the taxi trade.

### **Financial Implications**

Additional costs would be incurred if the tariff needs to be re-advertised; however the council is not legally bound to re-advertise any changes.

### **Legal Implications**

The Council has consulted on the proposed tariff increase and has considered any objections before adoption as required by law.

### **Conclusion**

After the public consultation process 25 letters of objection were received from members of the trade. There is a demonstrated need for an increase in the current tariff which has been requested by the trade.

The proposed increase as advertised was drawn up in collaboration with the trade and was felt to be reasonable as no increase has been given since August 2008.

### **Recommendation**

The Licensing Committee consider the objections and implement a new taxi tariff to take effect within two months from 5 April 2012, with a recommended implementation date of 7 June 2012.

**Maggie Rae**  
**Corporate Director of Public Health and Public Protection**

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### **Background Papers**

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976  
Taxis- Licensing Law and Practice

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – The current table of fares for the South Zone  
Appendix B – The proposed tariff circulated to the trade in June 2011  
Appendix C – The letters of objection to the first proposal  
Appendix D – Letter and Pro-forma sent to the trade in November 2011  
Appendix E – Replies to the Pro-forma  
Appendix F – The second proposed tariff and letter  
Appendix G – Objections to the second proposed tariff