

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**30 AUGUST 2007**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**TAXI LICENSING**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976**

**SECTION 65**

**APPLICATIONS TO AMEND THE TABLE OF TAXI FARES**

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To present two applications to amend the Table of Fares as follows:
- 1.2 Application A from Bridgend County Hackney Association (copy application attached at **Appendix A**).
- 1.3 Application B from Mr Paul Pride representing members of the taxi trade who have signed a petition in support (copy application attached at **Appendix B**).

**2. Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 The duties of the Council under the Act are regulatory in nature. There is little specific guidance issued in respect of setting taxi fares and consideration of applications is left to the discretion of each local authority. However, Members are advised that, in the absence of an authorised table of fares and taxi meters there is no mechanism to regulate charging and therefore protect the consumer.

**3. Background and policy issues**

- 3.1 The Council, as Licensing Authority, is empowered to fix the taxi fares within the County Borough. Any decision to vary the Table of Fares must be advertised in a local paper inviting objections from the public.
- 3.2 The Council has delegated to the Licensing Committee the power to determine revisions of hackney carriage fares and to hear and determine any objections received to proposed revisions.
- 3.3 The last approval to increase the Table of Fares was effected in December 2004.

#### **4. Current Table of Fares and position of Council in national league table**

- 4.1 The current Table of Fares is shown at **Appendix C**. Members are asked to note that taxi drivers must not charge above the maximum fare shown, but they are free to charge less if they wish. Typically, discounts may be offered to regular customers at the discretion of the individual driver. However, the meter must be switched on at the commencement of the journey and that meter must be calibrated to the current Table of Fares. Thus, the passenger is able to see the fare charged at all times and the effect of a discount, if offered.
- 4.2 The current Table of Fares shows the different tariffs programmed into taxi meters and the times at which each tariff applies. Tariffs 1 and 2 apply to saloons carrying up to 4 persons. Tariffs 3 and 4 apply when more than 5 persons are carried in larger taxis. Tariffs 1/3 are generally the “day time” tariff and Tariffs 2/4 cover evenings and bank holidays.

#### **5. Comparisons with neighbouring authorities**

- 5.1 Members have previously asked for details of the fare structure of neighbouring authorities when considering any applications. **Appendix D** is intended to assist Members’ assessment of applications. Each Council has a different table of fares, based on applications made by local taxi associations or individuals. However, Members are asked to bear in mind that the taxi culture and market forces differ across Wales and the comparisons submitted may be subject to change at any time.
- 5.2 At the time this report was prepared, the Council ranked at 268 out of 377 Councils in a national league table of taxi fares. However, the league tables change regularly as Councils may approve changes to their Table of Fares at any time during the year.
- 5.3 The current UK national average for a 2 mile journey on tariff one (daytime journey) is £4.60.

#### **6. Application A - Bridgend Hackney Association**

This application relates to the whole structure of the current Table of Fares and will impact on all taxi users. There is no application to amend the additional charges or “extras” currently shown on the Table of Fares.

- 6.1 The application has been summarised by the Council and is set out in the table attached at **Appendix A**.

## 7. Application B - Mr Paul Pride

- 7.1 This application relates to the whole structure of the current Table of Fares and will impact on all taxi users.
- 7.2 The application has been summarised by the Council and is set out in the table attached at **Appendix B**.
- 7.3 In addition to the mileage charge, Mr. Pride has requested a number of changes to the additional charges in the current tariff.
- 7.4 Firstly that the current charge for waiting time be increased from £12.00 to £15.00 per hour.
- 7.5 Secondly, that a new charge of £5.00 be introduced for the carriage of "white goods".

## 8. Comments on the applications

- 8.1 The Council has quite limited information about the taxi market as, unlike the bus and rail industry, no official statistics are collected on taxi journeys and/or passenger numbers. It is difficult therefore to substantiate any claims regarding increases or decreases in trade which would affect the earnings of individuals. It is, however, possible to provide some information on the increases in some of the running costs for licensees providing the service.

- 8.2 To assist Members the following information is provided:

The licence increases since December 2004 are as follows:

Licence Type	2004	2006 to date	2007 fee proposals
Vehicle	Grant - £225	Grant - £237	Grant - £243
Driver	Grant - £85	Grant - £94	Grant - £96

- 8.3 It is not possible to obtain written evidence of insurance premiums from individual drivers (as this is a private matter and premiums depend on individual circumstances), but there is a presumption that taxi drivers pay increased insurance premiums, and that a premium of £1500-£1800 per annum is not uncommon.
- 8.4 Finally, Automobile Association sources confirm that nationally, petrol prices have risen to 96.9 p per litre and diesel to 96.8 p per litre with Wales recording the highest at 96.5 p per litre for petrol and diesel at 97.3 p per litre. In May 2004 in Wales petrol was 85.2p per litre and diesel was 82.7p per litre.

## 9. Comments on application A

- 9.1 Based on the current tariff, a typical daytime two mile journey within the Borough would cost £4.25. This application seeks an increase which would result in this journey costing £4.70. The current UK national average for a two mile journey is £4.60.

Based on the current tariff, an evening journey of ten miles (for up to four persons) within the Borough is currently £19.60. This application seeks an increase which would result in this journey costing £25.30. The national average for a ten mile journey is £22.45.

## 10. Comments on application B

- 10.1 Based on the current tariff a typical daytime two mile journey within the Borough would cost £4.25. This application seeks an increase which would result in this journey costing £4.50. The current UK national average for a two mile journey is £4.60.

Based on the current tariff, an evening journey of ten miles (for up to four persons) within the Borough is currently £19.60. This application seeks an increase which would result in this journey costing £20.10. The national average is £22.45.

- 10.2 In respect of the request to add a new charge to the tariff for “white goods”, Members are advised that the current tariff provides for the carriage of luggage at £0.25p per item. It is suggested that it is not uncommon for shoppers to buy bulky items (such as televisions and small “white goods”) and choose not to pay the shop delivery charge. Instead, it is understood that customers are travelling home by taxi, which may be cheaper, and that drivers are expected to assist with carrying the goods to the house. The application seeks to make provision for this type of circumstance.

- 10.3 In respect of the request to increase waiting time, Members are advised that this charge is to cover the cost to the driver of waiting for the customer to leave the house or premises in case of delay. There are no published tables to assist Members in this case.

## 11. Summary

- 11.1 Taxis play a valuable role within the public transport network. The trade has been supportive of measures to improve public safety through the licensing regime which has resulted in cost implications for owners and drivers. In addition the cost of petrol and licence fees have increased since 2004. On this basis, an application to increase the current tariff is well-founded.

- 11.2 Members are, however, requested to take into account the fact that there are two trade organisations within the Borough and no apparent consensus of opinion on an appropriate level of fares. Furthermore, there is no significant supporting evidence from either applicant.
- 11.3 The purpose of setting a maximum tariff linked to taxi meters is to offer the public confidence and protection when using taxis and to avoid confusion and security problems for drivers when charging fares. Best practice guidelines suggest that there should be a balance between the needs of the travelling public, with reference both to what it is reasonable to expect people to pay but also to the need to give taxi drivers sufficient incentive to provide a service when it is needed.

## **12. Legal Implications**

- 12.1 If Members are minded to accept an application with or without amendments the Council is required to consult the public by publishing the proposal by way of Public Notice.
- 12.2 If no objection is received, or if objections are received and subsequently withdrawn, the variation to the Table of Fares will come into effect on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the Public Notice or the date of withdrawal of the last objection, whichever date is the later.
- 12.3 Any objections which are not withdrawn must be reported to a further meeting of the Licensing Committee for further consideration. Having considered the objections, the Council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date in which the new Table of Fares shall come into force.

## **13. Recommendations**

Members are requested to determine whether the Table of Fares should be amended and to confirm whether Application A or Application B should be adopted.

**P A Jolley**  
**Director of Legal and Democratic Services**

**Date 23 August 2007**

**Contact Officer:** **Yvonne Witchell**  
**Licensing and Registration Officer**

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**Bridgend, CF31 4WB**

Background documents:

Automobile Association fuel price comparisons at [www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)

League tables sourced from Private Hire Monthly publication

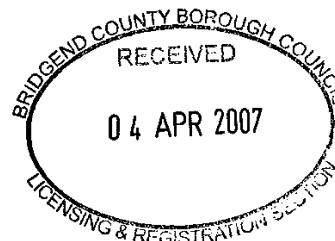
Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance available at [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

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**Bridgend County Hackney Association**

47 Wyndham Street Bridgend CF31 1EB

04 Apr. 07

Licensing Department  
B.C.B.C.  
Angel Street  
Bridgend



Dear Sirs,

After serious thought and discussion, our members feel that an increase in the current Tariff's applied to Hackney Carriage fares under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 65 is now due.

We feel that the committee should be aware of several issues being faced by the trade within the Bridgend County when considering the application.

- There has been no increase in fares since December 2004.
- There has been a year on year increase applied to both vehicle and driver licences issued by the Local Authority.
- The trade feels that any increase applied to the fares must be done in a careful manner due to the downturn in trade that has been experienced since the regeneration of Bridgend began.

We have attached our proposed increases for your approval, and we would be most grateful if you could give this matter your most urgent attention.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs L Griffiths

Chair: Mrs Lesley Griffiths  
Vice Chair: Mr Richard Evans  
Secretary: Ms Cathy Parmenter  
Treasurer: Mr Malcolm Scott

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Application A  
Bridgend County Association

<b>Tariff</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Min.chrg ½ Mile</b>	<b>Per mile</b>	<b>Per. 1/6</b>	<b>1 Mile</b>	<b>2 Miles</b>	<b>4 Miles</b>	<b>6 Miles</b>	<b>8 Miles</b>	<b>10 Miles</b>
<b>One</b> Up to 4 persons	6am to 8pm	£2.00	£1.80	30p	£2.90	£4.70	£8.30	£11.90	£15.50	£19.10
<b>Two</b> Up to 4 persons	8pm to 6am	£2.50	£2.40	40p	£3.70	£6.10	£10.90	£15.70	£20.50	£25.30
<b>Three</b> 5 or more persons	6am to 8pm	£3.90	£2.10	35p	£4.95	£7.05	£11.25	£15.45	£19.65	£23.85
<b>Four</b> 5 or more persons	8pm to 6am	£4.70	£2.70	45p	£6.05	£8.75	£14.15	£19.55	£24.95	£30.35



LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC  
SERVICES

Mrs Y Witchell,  
Legal & Property Dept.

I'm writing to council on behalf of the signed Taxi drivers of Bridgend County Borough with an application to increase the maximum tariff set by council for Hackney Carriages in accordance with the local government (miscellaneous provisions) act 1976 section 65.

The last increase in the said tariffs was on 13th December 2004, we feel the time is now right to apply for an increase. This will allow the licensed Taxi trade of Bridgend county to maintain the high level of services offered and remain profitable.

This application is based on the league table for Hackney Carriages published in The Private Hire and Taxi Monthly March 2007, and will bring Bridgend County Borough tariffs inline with the national average.

Tariff 1 flag from £2.00 increase to £2.25 national average = £2.26

Tariff 2 flag from £2.50 increase to £3.00 National average = £3.04

Tariff 3 flag from £3.90 increase to £4.20 no table available

Tariff 4 Flag from £4.70 increase to £5.20 no table available

No increase in the running mile

Increase waiting time from £13.50/hour to £15.00/hour

Introduce a new charge for the carriage of white goods £5.00

We hope the council will recognise this to be a minimal increase to the tariffs and that the tariffs set by council are the maximum the licensed Taxi trade can charge and thus support this application and bring our tariffs inline with the national average.

Yours Sincerely,



P F Pride

**Appendix B (contd)**

**Application B – Mr Paul Pride**

<b>Tariff</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Min.charge ½ Mile</b>	<b>Per mile</b>	<b>Per. 1/6</b>	<b>1 Mile</b>	<b>2 Miles</b>	<b>4 Miles</b>	<b>6 Miles</b>	<b>8 Miles</b>	<b>10 Miles</b>
<b>One</b> Up to 4 persons	6am to 8pm	£2.25	£1.50	25p	£3.00	£4.50	£7.50	£10.50	£13.50	£16.50
<b>Two</b> Up to 4 persons	8pm to 6am	£3.00	£1.80	30p	£3.90	£5.70	£9.30	£12.90	£16.50	£20.10
<b>Three</b> 5 or more persons	6am to 8pm	£4.20	£1.80	30p	£5.10	£6.90	£10.50	£14.10	£17.70	£21.30
<b>Four</b> 5 or more persons	8pm to 6am	£5.20	£2.10	35p	£6.25	£8.35	£12.55	£16.75	£20.90	£25.15

Bridgend County Borough Council  
Current Table of Fares

<b>Tariff</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Min. Charge ½ Mile</b>	<b>Per mile</b>	<b>Per. 1/6 mile</b>	<b>1 Mile</b>	<b>2 Miles</b>	<b>4 Miles</b>	<b>6 Miles</b>	<b>8 Miles</b>	<b>10 Miles</b>
<b>One</b> Up to 4 persons	6am to 8pm	£2.00	£1.50	25p	£2.75	£4.25	£7.25	£10.25	£13.25	£16.25
<b>Two</b> Up to 4 persons	8pm to 6am	£2.50	£1.80	30p	£3.40	£5.20	£8.80	£12.40	£16.00	£19.60
<b>Three</b> 5 or more persons	6am to 8pm	£3.90	£1.80	30p	£4.80	£6.60	£10.20	£13.80	£17.40	£21.00
<b>Four</b> 5 or more persons	8pm to 6am	£4.70	£2.10	35p	£5.75	£7.85	£12.05	£16.25	£20.45	£24.65

## Comparison Table of typical two mile journey in Wales

**WALES**

COUNCIL LICENSING AREA	MAY 2007 FARE
PEMBROKE	£5.00
CARDIFF	£4.90
VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£4.85
WREXHAM	£4.60
DENBIGHSHIRE	£4.50
MONMOUTHSHIRE	£4.40
<b>BRIDGEND</b>	<b>£4.25</b>
CARMARTHENSHIRE	£4.25
SWANSEA	£4.25
NEATH & PORT TALBOT	£4.21
CONWY	£4.20
GWYNEDD	£4.20
YNYS MON	£4.20
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£4.10
MERTHYR TYDFIL	£4.00
CAERPHILLY	£3.90
CEREDIGION	£3.90
TORFAEN	£3.90
NEWPORT	£3.70
FLINTSHIRE	£3.56
BLAENAU GWENT	£3.50