

Consultation with taxi and private hire licence holders

Proposed Taxi Fare Increase and Amendments to Policy on Vehicle Age and Medicals - April/May 2024

The Taxi Task and Finish Group are currently considering some requests from our Taxi and Private hire businesses, that we review parts of our policies.

Also, each year, the Taxi Task and Finish Group reviews our taxi fares. These are the rates that the meters are set to in the hackney carriage vehicles and are the maximum that can be charged when working in district (the Council does not set the rates for private hire vehicles).

The Taxi Task and Finish Group is made up of 3 Councillors from the Community Services and Licensing Committee. They cannot make decisions or changes to policy themselves. But they can make recommendations to the Community Services and Licensing Committee who are the decision-making group. This Committee has its next meeting on 27th June 2024.

The Taxi Task and Finish Group are supportive of the following 4 proposals. But they want to know your views before they agree their final recommendations to Committee.

- 1. Increase taxi fares for 2024 by up to 3.8 %.**
- 2. Remove the 5 year or less age policy on first licensing a vehicle and replace with an emission policy that the vehicle must be Euro 6 compliant, an electric vehicle or an ultra-low emissions vehicle.**
- 3. Ask for ideas from the trade about incentives for licensing wheelchair accessible vehicles.**
- 4. Change the time periods for when drivers need a medical to bring in line with the DVLA.**

There is more detail about the above proposals in the tables on the next page.

Your views are important. Please email the Licensing Manager rachel.andrew@stroud.gov.uk with your comments about the proposals below by 13th May 2024.

	Title	Proposal	Considerations
1	Increase Taxi Fares for 2024	<p>Taxi representatives have put forward a proposed new fare card. In summary the proposal is to increase the starting rates and reduce the yardage resulting in fare increases of up to 3.8% across all three rates. No changes are proposed to waiting times or extras.</p> <p>See the proposed new fare card for full details of the proposal.</p>	<p>The proposed increase is fairly low. None of the rate increases exceed the rate of inflation and some are less.</p> <p>It is better to do incremental increases each year rather than leaving it and having a bigger rise the following year.</p> <p>The current rate of inflation is 3.8% https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices</p> <p>You can see where Stroud sits in the national fare league tables here. https://www.phtm.co.uk/taxi-fares-league-tables/2024-04 We are currently in position 25. If you look at the fare league tables web page, make sure you choose the right month in the selection box to see the most up to date information.</p>
2	Remove 5 Year Vehicle Age Policy on First Licensing	<p>The proposal is to remove the current 5-year or less age policy on first licensing a vehicle. This applies to new vehicle applications and change of vehicle applications. The proposal is to replace it with a condition that the vehicle must be Euro 6 compliant, EV or ULEV. (ULEV is generally a plug-in hybrid)</p>	<p>Some members of the trade have said that they are struggling to find vehicles less than 5 years old that are affordable. They also feel that it is unfair that Tewkesbury Borough Council has a less restrictive vehicle policy.</p> <p>The latest Best Practice guidance from the DfT recommends against having vehicle age policies. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-england</p> <p>Having a policy based on emissions will fit in with the Council's objective of reducing emissions in the district.</p> <p>However, removing the age policy will mean that older vehicles can be licensed and that over time the fleet may become more aged and overall, the condition of vehicles may decline.</p>

3	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVS)	<p>Currently WAVs are exempt from the 5 year or less age policy on first licensing.</p> <p>This provides an incentive for some licence holders to invest in WAVs. Removing the age policy for all vehicles will mean this incentive is lost. What other incentives might encourage the trade to invest in WAVs?</p>	<p>Stroud District has a low number of WAVs which means that some people find it difficult to hire a taxi or private hire vehicle if they use a wheelchair. The Council needs to consider ways that this number can be increased. Any ideas for possible incentives that would encourage taxi and private hire licence holders to invest in a WAV would be welcomed.</p>
4	Medicals	<p>Currently our policy is that drivers must have a Group 2 medical when a driver is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First licensed - Every three years up to the age of 65 - Annually after age 65 <p>The proposal is that medicals will be required when a driver is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First licensed - At the age of 45 - Every 5 years from age 45 to 65 - Annually after age 65 	<p>This fits in with the rules for DVLA medicals for HGV and PSV licensing. It also is the recommendation in the latest Best Practice Guidance from the DfT https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-england</p>