

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING
COMMITTEE

AGENDA
ITEM NO

7

8 DECEMBER 2016

Report Title	Report of the Task and Finish Group: Stroud District Council Taxi Fares
Purpose of Report	To consider recommendations by the Task and Finish Group regarding a proposal by Stroud Taxi Association to increase Stroud District taxi fares.
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES: 1. That Stroud District taxi fares are not increased at the current time; 2. That the trade representatives be advised that the Committee will be content to consider another request for a review of the taxi fares in 12 months.
Consultation and Feedback	The Stroud Taxi Association proposal has been circulated to all Stroud licensed taxi and private hire drivers for comment prior to when the report went to Committee in September 2016.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	There are no Financial implications directly arising from this report. Adele Rudkin – Accountant Tel: 01453 754109 adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk
Legal Implications	The Committee was requested to consider the changes proposed by the Stroud Taxi Association to taxi charges at its last meeting. There is no requirement on the Committee to agree to the changes. If however, contrary to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which considered the proposals at the request of the Committee, the Committee resolves to make changes to the existing charges, the Council is required to advertise the changes and consider objections received. Karen Trickey, Legal Services Manager Tel: 01453 754369
Report Author	Rachel Andrew Principal Licensing Officer Tel: 01453 754401 licensing @stroud.gov.uk On behalf of Councillor Gordon Craig Chair of Task and Finish Group

1 Background

- 1.1 In June 2016 a request was made by Stroud Taxi Association to increase Stroud District taxi fares. The Association submitted a proposed revised version of the current fare card.
- 1.2 A report was put to Community Services and Licensing Committee on 7 September 2016. The report can be seen on Stroud District Council's web site through the following link.
https://www2.stroud.gov.uk/cmislive_public/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/252/Committee/3/Default.aspx
- 1.3 The report outlined the request and provided comparison tables with other Gloucestershire authorities. Representatives of Stroud Taxi Association attended the meeting and presented their case. At that meeting Committee resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group to put forward recommendations to Committee on 8 December 2016.

2 Task and Finish Group

- 2.1 The Task and Finish Group was made up of 4 Members of the Community Services and Licensing Committee and was chaired by Councillor Gordon Craig. Licensing Officers also attended the meetings. The Group met twice and considered the increased fares as proposed by Stroud Taxi Association. The group made the following observations.
 - a. At the last Committee meeting, Mr Day, representing the taxi trade, had said that costs such as insurance and maintaining vehicles had increased over the last 5 years. However fares had not.
 - b. When the Group compared the current fares in Stroud to the rest of Gloucestershire it showed that Stroud District's fares are already comparable or higher. In particular the Stroud fares are in line with South Gloucestershire who have reviewed their fares this year.
 - c. Mr Day told Committee that, as Stroud is a rural area, they have longer 'empty legs' between journeys compared to urban areas and this is the reason Stroud fares should be higher to cover the higher running costs.
 - d. Fares in other rural authorities such as the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean are not as high as the Stroud Taxi Association proposal.
 - e. The proposal put forward by Stroud Taxi Association would make Stroud fares generally the highest in Gloucestershire.

- f. The Group did not feel there was justification at the current time for Stroud District fares being as high as those proposed by Stroud Taxi Association.
- h. The Group were mindful to recommend the following minor changes but, given that their implementation at this time would result in a cost for all vehicle owners associated with having the meters recalibrated, the Group suggests these are deferred for the time being but incorporated into any future proposal from the trade.
 - Rate 3 to run from 12 midnight till 6am instead of from 1am till 7am. This will better compensate drivers for late night work.
 - In recognition that pushchairs enable young people who have difficulty walking to get about in the same way as wheelchairs enable older people who have difficulty walking to get about the group believes the same rule should apply to both and there should be no extra charge for pushchairs.
- g. Some of the other Gloucestershire Councils have indicated that they may be increasing their fares over the next 12 months.
- h. It would be reasonable to consider another request for an increase in taxi fares in one year time.

2.2 The Task and Finish Group make the following recommendations:

- a. That the Stroud District taxi fares are not increased at the current time.
- b. Committee will consider a further request from the trade to increase fares after one year.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 If Committee agree with the recommendation of the Task and Finish Group detailed in this report they should resolve that no changes are made to Stroud District taxi fares at the current time.