



Committee: LICENSING COMMITTEE
Date: THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2024
Venue: MORECAMBE TOWN HALL
Time: 1.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 4th January 2024 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business authorised by the Chair**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

Matters for Decision

5. **Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2024 Trade Consultation Responses** (Pages 3 - 12)

Report of the Licensing Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) **Membership**

Councillors Sally Maddocks (Chair), Margaret Pattison (Vice-Chair), Gerry Blaikie, Martin Bottoms, Phil Bradley, Claire Cozler, Andrew Gardiner, Erin Hall, Tim Hamilton-Cox and Shelagh McGregor

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Sarah Moorghen, Democratic Support - email smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iii) Changes to Membership, or apologies

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582000, or alternatively email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK DAVIES,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER, LA1 1PJ

Published on 24th January 2024.

Licensing Committee**Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2024
Trade Consultation Responses****1 February 2024****Report of Licensing Manager****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is to provide members with the results and feedback of a consultation with the local licensed trade regarding options for hackney carriages fares as part of the tariff review for the coming year.

Members of the Licensing Committee are required to make recommendations to Cabinet on preferred options prior to formal public consultation and approval.

This report is public**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) **It is recommended that members consider trade consultation responses and,**
- (2) **Make recommendations to the next Cabinet meeting for formal consultation and approval.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 makes provision for the Council to fix the rates of fares within the district for time, distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a hackney carriage. The table of fares is attached to the inside of a hackney carriage; this allows members of the public to view all charges when hiring a vehicle.
- 1.2 The setting of fares is an Executive function as it is not one that is listed in the Local Authorities (Function and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and therefore falls to the Cabinet to make the decision. In its capacity as an advisory Committee to Cabinet, the Licensing Committee are required to refer any decision to Cabinet for approval.
- 1.3 The current table of fares is attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The current hackney carriage table of fares, the frequency of tariff reviews and method for fare setting in future years was approved by the Councils Cabinet on 12th April 2022. This was following a period of engagement and consultation with the licensed trade.
- 2.2 It was approved that, retail price index (RPI) would be applied annually across the tariff, including flag fall and rolling rate, rounding down to the nearest 5p. The statutory requirement for advertisement and consultation would then follow before an updated table of fares would be published, with an updated table of fares coming into effect on a specified date.
- 2.3 The Licensing Manager applied the approved methodology to the current table of fares and presented options to members at the last Licensing Committee meeting, they included maintaining the current table of fares, deregulation of fare setting and setting additional charges. Additionally, a further option that amended yardage was carried forward to form part of consultation options.
- 2.4 Members resolved to consult directly with the licensed trade regarding the 5 options, additionally to ask a supplementary question regarding extra charges post 21.00 and their insight into potential impact on local trade.

3.0 Licensed Trade Consultation

- 3.1 An email detailing the options was sent to over 400 members of the local licensed trade, this included drivers, vehicle proprietors and private hire operators.

A copy of that email is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2 It details the options for consideration, along with a brief description on how that translates to the table of fares. Along with a preferred option, opinions were sought on the proposal to introduce an additional charge for journeys taken after a certain time. This was in response to the perceived lack of drivers operating in the evening and early hours.
- 3.3 A total of 28 responses were received as part of the trade consultation, a summary of the responses is attached at **Appendix 3**. Not all 28 responses included a definitive answer to a preferred option, instead preferring to provide insight into hackney carriage fares and other matters affecting the local licensed trade.
- 3.4 A total of 15 responses provided a definitive answer that fares should be maintained for a further 12 months, 7 responses were received supporting the option to apply retail price index (RPI) (6.1%). None felt that deregulation was a viable option and 2 supported the additional option to amend yardage and apply RPI.

9 responses were against introducing a separate charge for journeys made after a specific time and 5 supported the proposal.

4.0 Options

Options available to members are as follows;

- 1) Maintain current table of fares implemented in April 2023.
- 2) Apply retail price index (RPI) across the tariff. (6.1%)
- 3) Deregulate fare setting.
- 4) In addition to option 1,2, or 5 , apply an additional charge for fares taken after a set time. 21.00 has been suggested as an appropriate time.
- 5) Amending the yardage to 1/10th of a mile and increasing the rolling rate by 5p/7p/10p respectfully across the 3 tariffs and;

- 6) Make recommendations to Cabinet on preferred options for approval.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In 2022, following a period of consultation with the public and licensed trade, the Councils Cabinet, on recommendation of Licensing Committee agreed a methodology for fare reviews in relation to hackney carriages operating in the district.

- 5.2 At a previous meeting members of Licensing Committee requested the views of the local licensed trade on options presented, prior to progressing to making their recommendations to Cabinet.
That consultation has been facilitated and the results, including comments have been provided as part of this report. It is for members to determine what weight to place on results, given only 28 responses were received.

- 5.3 As this is an Executive decision the Licensing Committee is not the decision-making body so must refer this to Cabinet for their approval.

- 5.4 Members are requested to provide detailed reasons for their decisions, particularly if departing from the approved methodology.

<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) None.</p>

<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications to the Council as a result of this report</p>
--

<p>SECTION 151 OFFICER’S COMMENTS</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
--

<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Pursuant to Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the advertising requirements are as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Putting a notice in the local paper
--

2. Notice must specify a date, not less than 14 days from the date that the notice is published to allow for objections and is the date, if no objections are made, that the revised fare will come into force.
3. If objections are made, and not withdrawn the Council must consider those objections and the fares then will come into effect (modified or unmodified) within 2 months of the original date.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Licensing Committee – 4 January 2024

Contact Officer: Jennifer Curtis

Telephone: 01524 582732

E-mail: jcurtis@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: JC/Fares2024/25



HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF FARES

Applicable from Midday, Wednesday 19th April 2023

Tariff 1

For hirings commenced between 07:01hrs and 23:59hrs	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£3.20
For each of the subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	20p
Waiting Time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	20p

Tariff 2

For hirings commenced between: midnight and 07:00hrs For hirings commenced between: 19:00hrs and midnight on the 24thDecember For hirings commenced between: 19:00hrs and midnight on the 31stDecember For hirings commencing on: Any Bank Holiday or Public Holiday	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£4.80
For each subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	30p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	30p

Tariff 3

For hirings commenced between: 00:01hrs 25th December and 07:00 27th December For hirings commenced between 00.01 1st January and 07.00 2nd January	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£6.40
For each subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	40p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	40p

Additional Charges

For each passenger in excess of one (for the purpose two children aged 11 or under to count as one passenger for the whole distance)	20p
For each perambulator or article of luggage carried outside the passenger compartment of the vehicle	20p
SOILING CHARGE: A charge may be requested if the passenger(s) soils the vehicle.	Maximum Charge: £100.00

The driver may at his/her discretion require the payment of an agreed amount in advance of the journey. The amount will be set against the metered fare. A receipt will be given.

A booking fee up to a maximum of £4.00 may be charged where:

- (a) The Hackney carriage is booked in advance; and
- (b) (i) The Customer shall be told the cost of the booking fee at the time that the booking is taken and the amount recorded in the booking log; and
(ii) The customer shall be told that the booking fee is in addition to the fare for the journey; and
- (c) The hiring involves a separate journey of at least one mile, starting from the taxi rank or the operator's premises, to the pickup point.

Any complaints regarding the vehicle and/or driver should be addressed to the Licensing Service, Public Protection, Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF. Telephone [01524] 582033. Email licensing@lancaster.gov.uk

Lancaster City Council Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2024

From: licensing <licensing@lancaster.gov.uk>

Subject: Lancaster City Council Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2024

Good afternoon,

At Licensing Committee on Thursday 4th January 2024, members considered a report that set out a number of options to amend Hackney Carriage Fares for the coming year. [Agenda for Licensing Committee on Thursday, 4th January 2024, 1.00 p.m. - Lancaster City Council](#)

As you may be aware, the approved methodology, adopted by the Councils Cabinet in April 2022 after a period of consultation with the licensed trade is to apply retail price index (RPI) across the tariff (rounding down to nearest 5p). For consistency, RPI from November is to be used for the calculations, with any changes being applied annually.

Retail price index for November 2023 was 6.1%, applying RPI to the current tariff changes only the flag fall by 20p/30p/40p respectfully, it would not affect the rolling rate.

Members were presented with 4 options to consider; they were as follows.

1. Maintain current table of fares.
2. Apply RPI (6.1%) across the tariff and round to nearest 5p.
3. Deregulate Fare Setting (this would allow fares to be set by each individual proprietor)
4. In addition to option 1 or 2, apply an additional charge for fares taken after a set time. Eg 20.00, 21.00 or 22.00.

One member of the Licensing Committee suggested an alternative option (5), amending the yardage to 1/10th of a mile and increasing the rolling rate by 5p/7p/10p respectfully. Flag fall would remain as is. The thinking behind this is to align Lancaster with the national average for a 2-mile journey.

Option 4 was included due to concerns raised by representatives of the nighttime economy, including Business Improvement District and Pubwatch as they believe by including an additional charge for fares taken after a certain time will encourage drivers to work evenings, when they feel the shortage of drivers is affecting local businesses. It was suggested that £4.00 for journeys taken after 21.00 could apply. (much like the booking fee available now).

The purpose of this email is to gain your opinion on how members of Licensing Committee should progress with the Fare Review 2024 by answering the following questions.

1. What is your preferred option.
2. How do you feel applying an additional fare for journeys post 21.00 will affect the local licensed trade?

Please respond by way of return of email to licensing@lancaster.gov.uk by Friday 19th January 2024.

Please share this email with those without access to email and encourage responses, your feedback will shape the decisions taken by members of Licensing Committee.

Many thanks,

Jen

**Jennifer Curtis | Licensing Manager | Governance | Lancaster City Council | Morecambe Town Hall
| Marine Road East | Morecambe | LA4 5AF**

✉: licensing@lancaster.gov.uk | ☎: 01524 582033 | 🌐: www.lancaster.gov.uk

Consultation Responses

Names and email addresses have been redacted.

*Option 1 and 4 in my opinion.

*Just to confirm I would prefer to maintain the current fare structure this year. I feel strongly the current review process remains in place.

*Tariff 1

*My preferred option would be number 2. I think number 3 needs to be avoided at all costs.

With regards to an additional fee after a certain time I'm not entirely sure the increased fare would help early on in the evening, most drivers stay out until 2100 anyway (in my experience). This could also prove confusing to the customer.

I think the increased fare would be more helpful later on in the evening but maybe bring the time and a half rate forward to say 2200. This would be easier for the customer to understand and would have the same effect.

*Leave the fares and tariffs as they are but allow card payments to be surcharged as the vendor ie taxi proprietor is charged by the card companies as much as 2% of the fare this can amount up depending how many transactions per month!

*I like option 4 as this makes sense with the shortage of drivers at night.

*I'd prefer option 2.

*I cannot believe how the members come up with ridiculous other options, the taxi trade has been affected greatly by government and you the council subsidising a private company named STAGECOACH. Your members are probably not aware that all taxis and private hire vehicles are privately owned and self-employed. Secondly Lancaster as a night out is nothing compared to what it used to be ,you only have to look at the amount of pubs and clubs have been closed and replaced with accommodation, making Lancaster a residential area .Thirdly the amount of taxi licences being approved for people who don't live in the area, who have no KNOWLEDGE of the area, sat navs are a poor excuse for giving licences. Fourth and final point UBER, you the council say uber are legal to pick up in Lancaster yet you have said we are not allowed to join them, why?

* My response to the fare review is that it should stay as it is and no changes are required.

1. No changes, keep fares as they are.
2. No additional fares post 21.00 hrs.

*I would go with no tariff increase this year. I personally think an increase could have a bad effect in the current climate.

Please could I ask why the tariff 3 rolls into the next day For example tariff 3 starts at 00:01 on the 1st of January but doesn't end till 07:00 on the 2nd of January same as happens over the Christmas holidays etc Surely the tariff should return to tariff 2 at 00:01 on the 2nd January. I feel this has a effect on the public who rely on taxis in the early hours for getting to or from work etc Doesn't seem fair to the public.

*A combination of proposals 2 and 5.

*My preferred option & opinion is option 1

The present fare prices are adequate and in my opinion I wouldn't want any increase has this may stop people from using taxis because the cost is getting to expensive and due to the cost of living crisis they may use taxis less which would have a detrimental effect on the taxi trade.

Also putting an additional fare for journeys after 21.00 is a terrible option. By adding an extra charge would in my opinion discourage customers. Also if more taxis came out at night what effect would that have on daytime taxi availability.?

Also what evidence shows that by adding an extra charge will increase taxi numbers, Also bearing in mind that after midnight the fare price increases anyway already.!

Are the council going to offer more taxi ranks to cope with any potential increase in taxis, We presently have issues with Taxis over ranking outside Bella Italia which is resulting in problems with traffic issues when Taxis and food delivery drivers are trying to work.!

Once again option 1 is my preferred choice &

No additional charge should be applied after a certain time.

*Option 2 thank you.

*I have reviewed your email and As a driver I believe option 5 would be the best option, it is a good balance between not having a huge impact on the local and smaller trips but being just enough that over longer trips and multiple trips the drivers would see the increase in daily takings and would align with the national average.

I don't believe a extra charge in an evening is a good idea , in my experience there is always a rush before 00.00am to get a taxi or PH before the changeover to tariff 2, it's a fine balance between creating a fair service for the consumers and discouraging customers from using taxis I understand it may appear at times we are short of night drivers but as somebody that is actively working nights I know that this isn't the case and yes at times it may get busy but as overall night shift there is enough drivers, an evening increase would create confusion , as a driver I want people encouraged into the town centre and not looking for alternative transport or choosing not to go to town because we are creating higher prices I spoke to my customers this evening about the potential increase and the feedback I got was it feels greedy and just another way to keep charging more in a ever inflated crisis, a small simple increase that is in line with RPI without creating extra charges is fair for both passengers and drivers, if we out price our service we will lose customers and then nobody wins we transport thousands of people round the local area every year by creating extra charges we risk our local economy suffering due to people choosing to stay home we have to fair to all of Lancaster businesses.

Sorry I forgot to add , letting each taxi dictate fare price in an awful idea and would create carnage between drivers and passengers, we need stability and each passenger should know that regardless of taxi or operator all fares are equal.

*I would like to object to any fare increase for the year 2024. The fare structure at the present time is ample.

*Having read the email put out by licensing and processed the options I feel that option 2 would be best (RPI).

The addition of a charge after 21:00 etc I feel would have a negative impact on trade. From the conversions I've had with customers on this, it is mirrored as they would look more to using buses or try to look for other options like Uber.

I feel the message that this is giving from police to licensing is wrong. The main issue IMO is not the charge or the lack of drivers as you only have to do a shift now to see there is an abundance of drivers. I.E. Some monday afternoons there are 30 drivers logged on just for coastal and only a handful of jobs and nighttimes are getting the same until certain times or events. So a shortage I believe there isn't. The real reason is the fact drivers won't work nights due the lack of protection and recourse for any offenders. Having worked in the night-time economy at a local level liaising with different authorities for nearly 15 years, I know both sides and the lack of policing after 12 is mostly non existent unless there is extra funding allocated for operations(night safe etc). This has an impact on customers willing to wait at local bases and also workers who work in them, hence local closures with lack of staff. Obviously this will never be agreed by police as this can't be the narrative to admit lack of resource etc(IMO).

I speak with all ages/sex of driver and this is the constant theme.

So to sum it up I believe option 2 is the best for the driver and for the customers to try to maintain a balance. The other direction would be to look at the overall protection or response for any distressed driver or recourse for any assaults. To maybe also try to add more presence in the Morecambe economy regularly as they do in Lancaster near 32090. Morecambe is sometimes like the "forgotten Cousin".

Thank you for reading this email and I hope it helps to go toward creating a better snapshot of the bigger picture.

*I prefer option 2, and I vote for applying an additional charge for fares taken after 20.00 hours to encourage drivers to work nights and reduce the drivers shortage.

*Option 4

*1) He prefers option (1). - maintain the current table of fares

2) He believes that there are more than enough taxis at night and that there is no need to apply an additional fare after 21:00.

*I do not think a fair increase this year is appropriate.

*I would be happy with

Option 2.

Option 4.

Option 3. Proprietors settings their own fares seems a step closer to Uber. Which I'm absolutely against. If the towns interest is keeping fares lower they need to control the number of taxis/PH. The more vehicles on the road makes owning a vechicle less reasonable. Going back to pre Covid numbers would be crippling to trade the only way to solve that would be keep increasing the fares.

*I would leave the fares as is, and as i don't work evenings as I work days only, i don't feel I should say one way or the other.

*Option 1 - It's hard enough at the moment getting work during the week,ok the weekends are busier but the feed back I get from customers & especially over the Christmas period was the price of taxis.To just introduce a higher charge from 9pm will just kill us more,when it goes to time & half on week nights the work drops by 75%,the buses are doing this £1 thing after 7pm.. why would anybody think putting the taxi fares up would be a good idea?.

*My view is people are struggling and we don't want to price ourselves out. We have had a couple of tariff changes lately. Just leave everything the same. With regards to 2100 leave it at 12 I will deter customers from using taxis thanks.

*I would like to respond to your email and choose option 1 to keep the fare as it is and not change it at 21:00.