

## LICENSING COMMITTEE

1.00 P.M.

5TH FEBRUARY 2026

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Paul Tynan (Chair), Louise Belcher, Gerry Blaikie, Martin Bottoms, Martin Gawith, John Hanson, Margaret Pattison and John Wild

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Sally Maddocks (Vice-Chair) and Maria Deery

Officers in attendance:

Jennifer Curtis	Licensing Manager
Daniel Spencer	Lawyer
Danielle Harrison	Accountant
Sarah Moorghen	Democratic Support Officer

### 34 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 35 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

### 36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 37 HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE REVIEW 2026

This Licensing Manager introduced a report for the Committee to consider whether to introduce a new fare tariff in relation to licensed hackney carriages operating in the Lancaster district.

The current table of fares took effect on the 19th April 2023 and was appended to the report for the Committee's information.

The current hackney carriage table of fares, the frequency of tariff reviews and methods for fare setting in future years was approved by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022. 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 retail price index for November 2023, 2024, and 2025 was 5.3%, 3.6% and 3.8%. This had been applied across the tariff as approved by Cabinet. A table of fares reflecting those updates was appended to the report. Members were also advised that they could consider the soiling charge. Applying the RPI to this was not included in the methodology and it had remained at a maximum of £100 for a number of years.

It was noted that the local trade had been consulted. Representatives of all 110 Hackney Carriage Vehicles and 52 Private Hire Operators had been contacted. 13 responses had been received, 3 in support of an uplift and 10 in favour of the current table of fares being retained for the next 12 months.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to soiling charges, it was noted that there had been no feedback from the Trade that this was too low but they could be asked as a direct question in a future consultation.

The setting of fares is an executive function and therefore falls to Cabinet to make the decision, with Licensing Committee acting in an advisory capacity. However, as it is not a statutory requirement to review fares every year Cabinet are only required to approve an adjustment in fares.

It was proposed by Councillor Paul Tynan, seconded by Councillor Martin Gawith and unanimously agreed:

***Resolved:***

That the current table for fares be maintained for a further 12 months.

**38 PROPOSED LICENSING FEES 2026/27**

The Licensing Manager presented a report which provided members with the necessary information to enable the setting of licence fees for 2026/27.

The Committee was advised that the report concerned the setting of licence fees for a number of different licences. The setting of such fees was a non-executive function and was therefore a matter for Licensing Committee.

Members were advised that when setting discretionary charges, the general aim was to cover the cost of the service, accurately reflecting the full cost of provision including recharges. However, fees must be reasonable and proportionate and it was not lawful for the Council to seek to make a profit from licence fees that were within its discretion.

The Committee was informed that traditionally the fees charged for licences had included the costs of the administration and issue of the licence, the costs of monitoring compliance, and the costs of enforcing against those unlicensed and licensed. However, Local Authorities could no longer reflect costs of addressing unlicensed business activity when setting fees. They could however recover inspection costs and monitoring compliance relating to those already licensed. Therefore, time spent by the Licensing Service investigating unlicensed or alleged illegal activity had not been included in any time/task analysis.

The proposed fees for 2026/27 were appended to the report for consideration by the Committee.

Members also noted that in line with Cabinet's recent endorsement of the latest version of the fees and charges policy and proposed inflationary uplift, the Animal Licence fees would be increased by 3.8% from 1st April 2026.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to UBER undercutting prices, the £4 uplift on dual drivers licence renewals, subsidising cost of licenses, and how taxi drivers could be supported by reducing other costs. Members also asked about temporary event licences.

Members also asked if it was possible to consider allowing drivers to use other garages. The Committee was advised that the Trade had been consulted on this and it would be looked into further.

It was proposed by Councillor Louise Belcher, seconded by Councillor John Hanson and approved with 5 votes in favour and 3 abstentions:

***Resolved:***

- (1) That the Licensing fees for 2026/27 be adjusted as proposed in Appendix 2 appended to the report.
- (2) That the Licensing Manager advertise the updated fees as required by s70 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976.

### **39 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - TAXI AND PHV LICENSING**

The Licensing Manager presented a report with information regarding a Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on making all local transport authorities (LTAs) in England responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing.

The Committee was advised that the consultation follows the publication of the English devolution white paper by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in December 2024.

The Government was exploring the options for reforming taxi and PHV legislation to address the challenges caused by out-of-area working. The consultation and the officer prepared response was appended to the report for the Committee's consideration.

The Committee considered the response and raised a number of points including that the consultation lacked much information on how public safety would be dealt with, and whether having the same standards across a larger area would potentially result in lowering minimum standards.

***Resolved:***

That the report be submitted to Council Business Committee for final comments and approval.

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Chair

(The meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Sarah Moorghen, Democratic Support - email [smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk)**