

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)</p>
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<p>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>
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<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>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Putting a notice in the local paper |
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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

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