

Committee: Council

Date:

Title: Review of Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff

Thursday,
22 May 2025

Lead Councillor Alex Armstrong,

Member: Chair of the Licensing and Environmental
Health Committee

Report Jamie Livermore, Licensing & Compliance

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Summary

1.1. The Licensing Authority sets the maximum fare tariff rates for Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed by it for journeys within the District.

1.2. At the meeting of Council on 25 February 2025, Members resolved to approve the commencement of the public consultation in line with statutory requirements, following the receipt of a written submission by members of the Uttlesford Hackney Carriage Trade.

1.3. At the meeting of the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee on the 15 May 2025, Members resolved to recommend approval the proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage fare tariff following its review of the responses to the public consultation.

Recommendations

2.1. That Council consider the responses to the public consultation and determine whether to approve or reject the proposed increases to the Hackey Carriage fare tariff.

Financial Implications

3.1. The costs incurred by the Council of implementing any fare changes would be contained within future licence fees.

Background Papers

4.1. A – 'Review of Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff' - Report C71 at Council 25 February 2025

B – 'Review of Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff' – Report 3 at the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee 15 May 2025

Impact

5.1.

Communication/Consultation	A statutory public consultation took place for three weeks during the periods of Thursday 3 April and Thursday 24 April 2025. Notices were published in local newspapers, the Council's website, and the Council's Facebook page. The Licensing & Environmental Health Committee have also considered the report and proposed their recommendation to Council.
Community Safety	Sufficient availability of taxi and private hire vehicles within the District is an important aspect to protecting public safety.
Equalities	Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

	<p>The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.</p> <p>The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the keyways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.</p> <p>The review of taxi fares will ensure that all customers are charged a fair price for the taxi service. Furthermore, the recently enacted Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 will ensure that disabled people can access transport services, free from the fear of discriminatory treatment or being faced with additional charges</p>
Health and Safety	<p>The fundamental purpose of the licensing regime is to establish a position where passengers can use these vehicles with a high degree of confidence about their safety. This principle is at the heart of</p>

	<p>the <u>Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards</u>.</p> <p>Licensing authorities are required to have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.</p>
Human Rights/Legal Implications	<p>Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 details the process for fixing of fares, which will be followed. If no objections are made within the period specified in the notice, or if all objections made are withdrawn, the table of fares will come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date the last objection is withdrawn, whichever date is the later. If objection/s are made within the period specified in the notice and are not withdrawn a further date shall be set. This date must be no later than 2 months after the first specified date, on which the fares come into force with or without modifications as decided by the Council, after the Council has considered any objections.</p>
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

- 6.1 A district council has the power to set fares for Hackney Carriages under the provisions of s65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ('the Act').
- 6.2 Fares for hackney carriage can only be agreed following consultation with the trade and public - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 6.3 It is good practice for a local authority to regularly review taxi fares.
- 6.4. Following approval from the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee at its meeting on the 21 January 2025 and the Full Council meeting on the 25 February 2025, a statutory public consultation took place during the periods of Thursday 3 April to Thursday 24 April 2025.
- 6.5. A public notice was published in the Saffron Walden Reporter and Great Dunmow Broadcast on Thursday 3 April, two posts were published on the Council's Facebook page on Monday 7 April and Tuesday 22 April, and a notice was displayed on the Council's website for the full three-week period.
- 6.6. The consultation attracted two responses, one in support and one against the proposed increases. The responses are shown below-

Not in support - *The public transport is terrible from villages into the closest hubs. There is no option other than to drive or use a taxi. Taxi fares are already high. What hope do the elderly have in paying this increase.*

In support - *Taxi drivers are self employed and should be able to charge slightly extra in line with inflation like any other employee would get*

Both respondents declared not to be current Uttlesford licensed drivers.

- 6.7. As part of the consultation, Licensing Officers asked further questions which may help support the Committee in making its determination.

One question asked - *Are you familiar with where the taxi ranks are located in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet?*

One respondent selected *Great Dunmow*, and the other selected *none*.

The second question asked - *Have you hired a taxi from any of the taxi ranks in*

Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, or Stansted Mountfichet in the past 12 months?

One respondent selected *Great Dunmow*, and the other selected *none*.

- 6.8.** Members are advised to refer to the report and background papers presented before them at the meeting of the 25 February 2025, shown as **Background Paper A**.
- 6.9.** It is important that taxi drivers are fairly paid to try to ensure that taxi driving remains a viable career, licensed taxi drivers do not stop being a taxi driver and people will consider applying to become a licensed taxi driver. If the number of licensed taxi drivers falls, then this could affect the supply of taxis and increase the risk that taxi users are unable to get a taxi or have to wait longer for a taxi. There could be an increased risk to the safety of some people if taxi wait times increase or they are unable to get a taxi. The number of active licensed taxis in Uttlesford as of the 7 May 2025 is 47, which is consistent with the past number of years.
- 6.10.** Taxi fare regulation provides certainty and is intended to protect consumers from overcharging.
- 6.11.** The last increase to the Uttlesford Hackney Carriage Fare tariff was in 2021. For comparative purposes, the average price of fuel in the UK was at 128.02p for unleaded and 130.4p for diesel in May 2021, while is most recently at 132.8p for petrol and 139.1p for diesel in May 2025. It's also widely recognised that the cost of vehicle insurance and maintenance has increased over this period.
- 6.12.** Taxis provide an increasingly important transport option for disabled and elderly people. Increases in fares will affect those sections of the community where such transport costs are a significant percentage of their income. Where public transport is not provided or regular, taxis may be the only public transport option for residents in the more remote villages. This can be a significant additional cost for living in rural locations.
- 6.13.** It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will

remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

- 6.14.** It is necessary to propose a new second date of implementation should there be any variation made to the existing taxi fare tariff. Licensing Officers would suggest Monday 16 June as this is within statutory timescales and provides necessary time for Full Council for approval.
- 6.15.** Once any new tariff of fares comes into effect the existing tariff shall cease to have effect and all Hackney taxi drivers will be entitled to charge the revised fares. In practice, it is suggested that a 2-week grace period is allowed for all drivers to move to the new fare structure, to allow time to have their meters recalibrated and a new calibration certificate issued. To assist with this, Licensing Officers will seek to provide a day where the car park at the Little Canfield site can be utilised for taxis to turn up and have their meters changed by a recognised meter company. It is not a mandatory requirement for proprietors to change their meter as any left on the existing tariff would remain below the maximum rate.
- 6.16.** When considering whether to approve the proposed increases Council should have regard to the likely impact on the licensed trade and of those who use licensed vehicles. This will include balancing any potential negative impact on drivers if the fares are not increased and the potential negative impact on users if they are increased.
- 6.17.** Naturally the Council wishes to ensure fares are balanced between the need for drivers to cover costs and earn a living, against what it is reasonable for the public to pay.
- 6.18.** A meeting of the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee was held on 15 May 2025 to review the responses to the public consultation and make its recommendation to Council for approval. Its recommendation was to approve the proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage fare tariff. Members can view

the report, background papers and minutes at **Background Paper B**.

6.19. Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To set standard fares throughout the district
- ii) To prevent fraud and overcharging of passengers
- iii) To ensure openness and transparency in decision making.