

# Review of Hackney Carriage Tariffs



**Report to:** Licensing Committee

**Date:** 17 October 2023

**Lead Officer:** Norah Nolan, Interim Assistant Director Environment (01279) 446132

**Contributing Officers:** Adam Sherwood, Principal Licensing Officer (01279) 446010  
Amanda Turner, Senior Licensing Officer (01279) 446122

## Recommended that:

- A** The Licensing Committee recommend to the next Cabinet meeting on 30 November 2023 that the Hackney Carriage Tariff Schedule, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be adopted.
- B** If members approve the tariff, the Interim Assistant Director Environment be authorised to take the necessary steps as stated in the report to implement the tariff changes with effect from 22 December 2023, provided that no objections to the proposals are received; or
- C** If any objections are received to the proposed changes following the consultation period, that the decision be referred to the next meeting of this Committee on 16 January 2024.

## Background

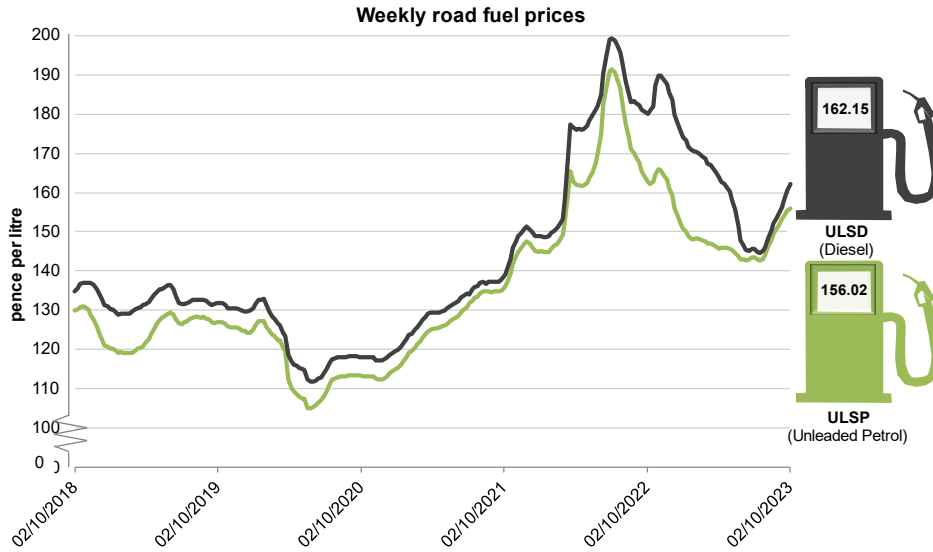
1. The Licensing Committee recommended on 4 July 2023 that this item be deferred to the October Committee allowing time for Officers to collate an Equality Impact assessment, Benchmarking Information, figures from previous tariffs and reasoning from the trade to move the evening tariff to the earlier start time of 8pm.
2. Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 gives local authorities power to determine maximum rates and fares charged by Hackney Carriages.

## Issues/Proposals

- Officers undertook an Equality Impact Assessment and the result of this is set out in Appendix A to the report. This raised no specific concerns.
- Representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade recognised by the Council for consultation purposes have proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage Tariffs.
- The previous increases were in November 2014, November 2020 and August 2022.
- For information purposes the chart below (source: economic.com) shows a chart from the Office of National statistics on the UK Inflation rate for the last 12 months, demonstrating that the overall cost of living continues to substantially rise in 2023, even if not as much as it did in 2022. Recent months are seeing an improved trend but overall the inflation rate remains high at 6.7 per cent, with a government target set at 2 per cent.



- The cost of fuel hit a record high in July 2022 at 199.2 pence per litre, and although decreasing to 145.1 in July 2023, there has been an increase each month since then, currently sitting at 162.2 on 2 October 2023. (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-road-fuel-prices>)



8. In conducting benchmarking against other local authorities, the table below shows a 2-mile rate for the neighbouring authorities as of 4 October 2023 from Private Hire Taxi Monthly.

Position on chart taken is from 340 local authorities. No 1 being the most expensive Authority, and no 340 the cheapest.

Authority Price Position on chart

Epping	£5.50	Joint 326 <sup>th</sup>
Braintree	£6.90	Joint 174 <sup>th</sup>
Welwyn Hatfield	£7.00	Joint 155 <sup>th</sup>
Harlow (current rate)	£7.20	Joint 128 <sup>th</sup>
Harlow (proposed rate)	£7.50	Joint 90 <sup>th</sup>
Chelmsford	£7.70	Joint 60 <sup>th</sup>
Brentwood	£8.10	Joint 40 <sup>th</sup>
East Herts	£8.20	Joint 30 <sup>th</sup>
Broxbourne	£8.20	Joint 30 <sup>th</sup>
Uttlesford	£8.30	Joint 27 <sup>th</sup>

9. Officers also requested table of fare tariffs from eight neighbouring authorities. This is set out in Appendix B to the report.

10. The proposed Harlow rate rises for 2023 is as follows:

- a) Tariff 1 = 4.62%
- b) Tariff 2 = 4.91%
- c) Tariff 3 = 4.48%
- d) Tariff 4 = 5.13%

11. The overall average rise for all Tariffs = 4.78%
12. Bringing the Start of the evening rate on Tariff 2 and Tariff 4 forward by 2 hours from 10.00pm to 8.00pm is the only other change. The Taxi Trade have been asked for their comments on the reasoning for this time change and their reply is:

“This town is unique in that unlike neighbouring towns we have absolutely no night life and the evening/night shift is ended after the last train at around 0.30 a.m., unlike a few years ago when we did have a vibrant night life and the night shift went on until 4 – 5 a.m. This means that late drivers have a very short window of opportunity to earn any money, and this has led to a shortage of drivers willing to work late and cover the work. Bringing the night rate forward from 10 p.m. to 8 p.m. will go some way to encouraging drivers to work later and reward those already covering the unsociable hours”.
13. Additionally, Officers would add that the benchmarking exercise demonstrates that the evening tariff start time will vary from authority to authority, ranging from as early as 6pm (Brentwood), and as late as 11pm (Braintree, Chelmsford, Welwyn Hatfield), with other authorities somewhere in between.
14. The proposed revised tariffs for Harlow are set out in Appendix C to the report.
15. The previous tariffs approved in 2014, 2020 (average tariff increase of 5.2%) & 2022 (average tariff increase of 6.5%) can be seen at Appendix D to the report.
16. If members agree to approve the increase in fares and charges to the Hackney Carriage tariff, then the Council is required to publish a notice in a local paper, the Council shall place the public notice in the Harlow Guardian newspaper.
17. The notice must contain the proposed tariff and specify the period in which objections can be made, this being 14 days from the date that the notice is first published in the paper.
18. The notice shall be placed in the newspaper on Thursday 7 December 2023 with the consultation ending Thursday 21 December 2023.
19. A copy of the paper with the notice must also be made available at the Council offices for public inspection for a period of 14 days from the date the notice is first published.
20. If no objection is received, the revised tariffs will come into operation from Friday 22 December 2023.
21. If an objection is received within the consultation period, it must be considered. If the Council determines to revise its decision on the tariffs because of an objection, a revised date would be set for the implementation of the revised tariff following a further referral from this Committee to Cabinet.

22. Each hackney carriage meter shall be upgraded to the new tariff as arranged directly with the regions meter installation engineer. The Council shall inform drivers and the meter installation engineer at the end of the consultation period whether any objections were received before commencement of meter upgrades.
23. Article 1 of the First Protocol of Human Rights Act 1998 guarantees the right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions. Imposing of controls on Hackney Carriage tariffs is an interference with this right. However, it is permissible to use existing laws to control the use of property in accordance with the public interest.
24. Provided Members are satisfied that control of the tariff is in the public interest and that the tariff adopted is reasonable, there would be no unjustifiable breach of this article.

## **Implications**

### **Equalities and Diversity**

An Equality Impact Decision Tree has been completed and required an Equality Impact Assessment, which can be viewed at Appendix A.

### **Climate Change**

None specific.

### **Finance**

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance

### **Governance and Corporate Services**

Provided that proper consultation is undertaken and that all advertising requirements are discharged the risk to successful challenge is minimal.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Benchmarking study from 8 neighbouring Authorities

Appendix C - Proposed Tariff

Appendix D – Previous 3 Tariffs of 2014, 2020, 2022

## **Background Papers**

None.

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

None.