

Review of Hackney Carriage Tariffs



Report to: Licensing Committee

Date: 18 June 2024

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Recommended that:

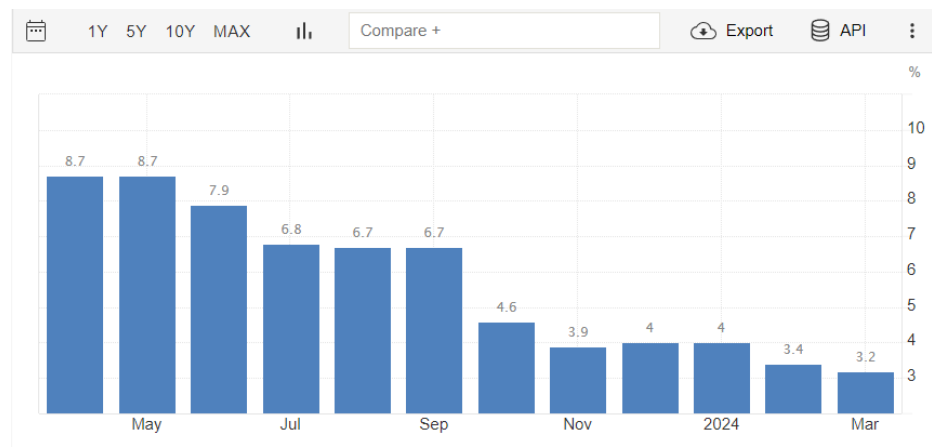
- A** The Licensing Committee recommend to the next Cabinet meeting on 11 July 2024 that the Hackney Carriage Tariff Schedule, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be adopted.
- B** If members approve the tariff, the Assistant Director Planning and Environment be authorised to take the necessary steps as stated in the report to implement the tariff changes with effect from 2 August 2024, 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 10 September 2024 with any recommendation to Cabinet on 12 September 2024.

Executive Summary

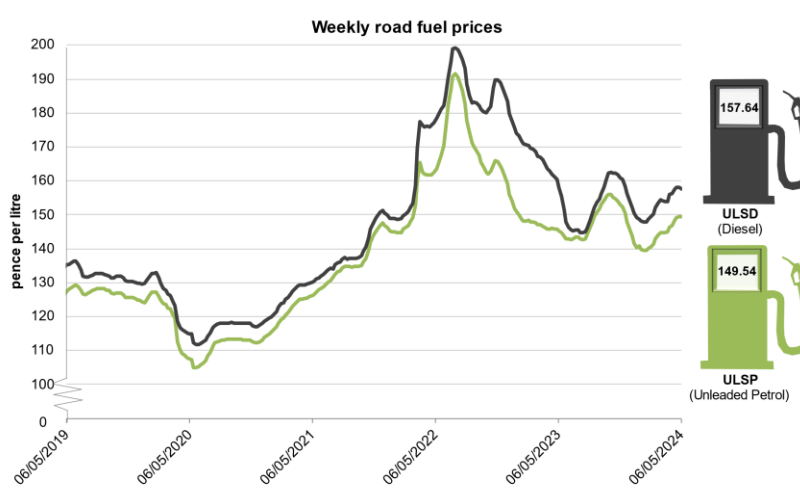
- A** Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 gives local authorities power to determine maximum rates and fares charged by Hackney Carriages. A submission from the Hackney Carriage trade has been put forward for consideration by the committee.

Background

1. Officers undertook an Equality Impact Assessment in June 2024 and the result of this is set out in Appendix D to the report. This raised no specific concerns.
2. The four previous hackney carriage tariff increases were November 2014, November 2020, August 2022 and December 2023. These can be viewed at Appendix C to the report.
3. For information purposes the chart below (source: tradingeconomic.com) shows a chart from the Office of National statistics on the UK Inflation rate for the last 12 months. Inflation affects the affordability of goods and services for UK households. The government target for inflation remains at 2 per cent, with the latest rate for April 2024 being 2.3 per cent (not shown on graph).



4. 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 157.64 pence per litre on 6 May 2024. (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-road-fuel-prices>)



5. In conducting benchmarking against other local authorities, the table below shows a 2-mile rate for neighbouring authorities as of 6 June 2024 from Private Hire Taxi Monthly.
6. The chart is kept up to date with data from 341 licensing authorities. Position 1 being the most expensive Authority, and position 341 the cheapest.
- 7.

Authority	Price	Position on chart
Thurrock	£6.00	Position 308
Colchester	£6.90	Position 188
Braintree	£6.90	Position 185
Welwyn Hatfield	£7.00	Position 182
Harlow (current rate)	£7.20	Position 148
Cambridge City	£7.30	Position 134
North Herts	£7.50	Position 114
Epping Forest	£7.50	Position 109
Stevenage	£7.60	Position 99
Chelmsford	£7.70	Position 82
Southend on Sea	£7.80	Position 79
Harlow (proposed rate)	£8.00	Position Joint 58
Brentwood	£8.10	Position 52
East Herts	£8.20	Position 42
Broxbourne	£8.20	Position 41
Uttlesford	£8.30	Position 40

Issues/Proposals

8. Representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade recognised by the Council for consultation purposes have proposed increases to the Hackney Carriage Tariffs.
9. The proposed Harlow rate rises for 2024 is as follows:
 - a) Tariff 1 = 4.83%
 - b) Tariff 2 = 4.56%
 - c) Tariff 3 = 5.03%
 - d) Tariff 4 = 5.41%
10. The overall average rise for all Tariffs = 4.96%
11. The proposed revised tariffs, showing these increases are set out in Appendix A to the report.
12. The existing Tariff approved in December 2023 is set out in Appendix B to the report. 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.

13. 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.
14. The notice shall be placed in the newspaper on Thursday 18 July 2024 (subject to approval from Cabinet on 11 July 2024) with the consultation ending Thursday 1 August 2024.
15. 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.
16. Once verified that no objection was received, the revised tariffs will come into operation.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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 general interest.
20. 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 D to the report.

Climate Change

None specific

Finance

The report proposes to increase the four Hackney Carriage Tariffs, with an average increase of 4.96%. The tariff is the maximum fare a driver may charge a fee paying passenger in their taxi using the taximeter. There are no direct financial implications arising for Harlow Council. All financial resources to implement any proposed changes are included within the medium-term financial plan.

A submission from the Hackney Carriage trade has been put forward for consideration by the committee. The tariffs have been benchmarked against other local authorities and a consultation will be carried out.

Author: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Governance

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

Author: Julie Galvin, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed Tariff

Appendix B - Current Tariff Dec 2023

Appendix C - Previous Tariffs for 2022, 2020 and 2014

Appendix D - Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None