

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 27 November 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Peter Clark, Alistair Gordon, Claire Parris, Ceara Roopchand and Carolina Veres

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 6.20pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lloyd Briscoe, Coleen De Freitas, Lynda Guy, Robin Parker, Ellie Plater, Tom Plater, Lorraine Rossati and Tom Wren.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 4 DECEMBER 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 4 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF REVIEW

The Licensing Officer presented a report to the Committee to conduct the annual review of the Hackney Carriage Tariff Review report.

The purpose of the report was to determine whether the current fare structure should be increased or remain the same, ensuring a fair balance for both passengers and drivers. It was noted that the proposed tariffs reflected the current operating costs, while aiming to keep the service accessible and affordable for the community.

The Licensing Officer noted that the annual review process had been established by the General Purposes Committee in March 2022. The Committee were informed that this year's review had been delayed due to aligning with the Council's wider review of all licensing fees.

A preliminary consultation had taken place with all Hackney Carriage and private hire drivers between 18 July 2025 to 1 August 2025, with key feedback including a request to round final fare amounts for ease of cash payments. This option had been incorporated into the public consultation.

A formal 28-day public consultation had been undertaken from 15 October 2025 to 12 November 2025, which presented four tariff options for consideration. It was noted that summaries of responses were included in Appendix 9 of the report.

The Committee were asked to approve one of the four proposed options and for this to be implemented from 15 December 2025.

A question was raised regarding reviews of the tariffs and officers confirmed that tariffs were reviewed annually unless the Committee decided otherwise.

Members discussed the comparisons with neighbouring authorities. It was noted that while Stevenage appeared higher than some areas, the published rankings did not specify when other authorities had last reviewed their tariffs and therefore some may reflect outdated fares.

A question was raised regarding the response rate to the consultation. Officers reported that 20 responses had been received. This included nine Hackney drivers (45%), three private hire drivers (15%) and the remainder from operators or members of the public.

Members discussed the limited engagement in the consultation and asked whether response levels could be improved. Officers confirmed that all licensed drivers and operators received direct communications via email or post. Drivers had also been invited to a Taxi Forum early in the consultation period. Despite extended consultation periods, social media promotion, website publication and outreach to community venues, engagement remained low.

Officers explained that efforts were underway to establish a WhatsApp group to improve direct contact with the Licence holders. Members acknowledged and thanked officers for their efforts to reach licence holders.

The Committee then proceeded to review the four tariff options.

It was **RESOLVED** that, Option 2 in the report be approved.

This was to increase the initial fare by 5p (£3.85 to £3.90) for the first 528 yards, then a 5p increase of each additional 220 yards (or part thereof) amended from 194 yards, and to increase Tariffs 1,2 and 3 by an average of 4%.

Changes to the tariff will take effect from 15 December 2025.

4 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be

excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports (if any) being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

6 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR