

Equality Impact Assessment: Proposed Hackney Carriage (Taxi) Fare Tariff Changes

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

1. Key recommendations:

The report outlines a proposal to consider changes to the current taxi tariff table.

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits Licensing Authorities to set the fares tariff for Hackney carriages (taxis) licensed in the district. The tariff sets the maximum fares that taxis can charge the public when using their vehicles. Exeter City Council, in common with most other Councils, have used this power for many years and the last tariff increase was agreed in November 2022.

All changes to the hackney carriage tariff table in use in Exeter must be approved by the Executive. The legislation requires that before any alteration to the tariff table can take effect a public notice explaining the changes must be placed in a local newspaper. The public then must be provided with a period of at least 14 days to make comment on the proposals. If no adverse comment/objection is received the approved changes must take effect. Alternatively if adverse comment/objection is received then the matter must be returned to allow the Executive to consider the representation(s).

Research conducted by the Licensing Authority confirms that Exeter currently has the fifth most expensive 2-mile fare level in Devon and is the 133rd most expensive fare in the UK over that distance. If the proposed increases are implemented then Exeter would have the most expensive 2-mile fare level in Devon, and would move to approximately 10th position in the national list.

It is recommended that the Executive give consideration to the draft tariff table to be consulted upon as attached and agree:

- (1) That the proposals are put out to public consultation to run from 5 October 2022 until 2 November 2022 (4 weeks);
- (2) That a public notice containing the proposed variation table is published in one local newspaper during the above period; and
- (3) The matter is brought back to Executive on 29 November 2022 for determination.

2. Committee name and date: Executive 20 May 2025

3. Stakeholders: Residents, Elected Members, Visitors to the City and Hackney Carriage Trade

4. Main beneficiaries are: The Hackney carriage trade. Residents, Elected Members and Visitors to the City through a properly funded Hackney carriage trade providing a high quality service.

5. Consultation: Minimum 14 day consultation following newspaper advert required by Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, but in this instance we have proposed a 29 day consultation.

6. Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed recommendation will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact. This is must be noted in the table below** alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed policy amendment would have a potential impact on this characteristic.		
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Negative	Medium	POSITIVE A properly resourced taxi trade with an appropriate tariff table would mean that the taxi trade remains economically stable, thereby attracting new drivers into the trade to continue and improve this vital public transport. NEGATIVE Wheelchair users and disabled persons are statistically more likely to use taxis than persons who do not identify themselves as disabled. As such a rise in the tariff table would impact this group more economically. Significant price rises may lead to taxis becoming less affordable and as such increase the risk of social exclusion amongst those who rely on taxis for their transport needs. Some potential mitigation may be provided by including relevant local disability groups in the consultation process. Should adverse consultation responses be received then the matter would be referred back to the Licensing Committee for further consideration.

Sex/Gender	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed policy amendment would have a potential impact on this characteristic.		
Gender reassignment	There is no evidence to suggest that the action plan would have a potential impact on this characteristic.		
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	There is no evidence to suggest that the action plan would have a potential impact on this characteristic.		
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	There is no evidence to suggest that the action plan would have a potential impact on this characteristic.		

Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	Negative	Medium	POSITIVE A properly resourced taxi trade with an appropriate tariff table would mean that the taxi trade remains economically stable, thereby attracting new drivers into the trade to continue and improve this vital public transport. NEGATIVE Surveys by the DFT have identified that young adults and elderly persons are more likely than other age groups to use taxis on a regular basis. As such a rise in the tariff table would impact these age groups more economically, particularly the elderly who are more likely to have a fixed income. Significant price rises may lead to taxis becoming less affordable and as such increase the risk of social exclusion amongst those who rely on taxis for their transport needs. Some potential mitigation may be provided by including relevant local age awareness groups in the consultation process. Should adverse consultation responses be received then the matter would be referred back to the Licensing Committee for further consideration.
<u>Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion</u> • Promotion of the consultation to local age and disability awareness groups to ensure that their views are taken into consideration, with any negative comments triggering a referral back to the Licensing Committee for further consideration.			

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