

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 20 October 2026

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Hackney Carriage Tariff Increase

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities

Director Contact Details: Anna Coles, Director of Adults and Community Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 21 July 2026, Cabinet considered the suggested increase to the Hackney Carriage Tariff and resolved to commence the public consultation on the proposed Table of Fares. The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the statutory process set out in section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LGMPA76).
- 1.2 In accordance with the LGMPA76, notice of the proposed fare increases was published in the *Torbay Weekly* on 13 August 2026 under the Public Notices section (page 36). A copy of the notice is included at Appendix 1. The notice invited objections to be submitted by 4 September 2026. Any objections received must be duly considered before the revised Table of Fares can come into effect, either as originally advertised or with such amendments as may be considered appropriate.
- 1.3 Two objections were received during the consultation period. Whilst neither objection proposed an alternative fare structure, both objectors expressed opposition to any increase in taxi fares.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, allows the Council to set the maximum level of charges to be levied by all Hackney Carriages operating under its control. The Council does not have powers to set fares for journeys in private hire vehicles.
- 2.2 The setting of the Table of Fares (tariff) is an executive function of the Council.
- 2.3 The Tariff was last increased in October 2024.

- 2.4 The Table of Fares (Tariff) should be set to enable sustainable income for drivers, future investment in vehicles and to clearly set rates that minimise the opportunity for overcharging or confusion.
- 2.5 In accordance with the statutory procedure set out in Section 65 of the LGMPA76, the Council must consider the two objections received and set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the tariff shall come into force with or without further modifications.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the Table of Fares (Hackney Carriage Tariff) as advertised be approved and come into force on 4 November 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Public Notice in Torbay Weekly on 13 August 2026

Appendix 2: Table of consultation responses

Background Documents

Report considered by the Cabinet on 21 July 2026

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=741&MId=24500&Ver=>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Cabinet approved the proposed changes to the Table of Fares on 21 July 2026. The decision could not be advertised immediately as a two-week period is required during which Councillors may request that the decision be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. This process is known as a "call-in". Following the expiry of the call-in period, notice of the proposed fare changes was published in the *Torbay Weekly* on 13 August 2026 as part of the statutory consultation process. Details of the proposals were also made available on the Council's website to invite comments and objections from interested parties.

All licensed drivers and vehicle proprietors were emailed with a link to the proposed table of fares and were given until 4 September 2026 to make any comments or objections.

- 1.2 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LGMPA76), allows the Council to set the maximum costs and fares that drivers may charge the public for journeys taken in a taxi. The Council does not have powers to set fares for journeys in private hire vehicles. Members should note that drivers may charge a lower fare or offer a discount if they wish and they can negotiate fares for travel outside of the district boundaries.
- 1.3 Taxi fares are made up of an initial hiring charge (flag fall) and a mileage rate, both of which are expressed in terms of distance and or time. This is because when a hired taxi is stationary or moving at less than 6mph in traffic the meter continues charging by time instead of distance. It can never charge both time and distance at the same time.
- 1.4 The Table of Fares (Tariff) should be set to enable sustainable income for drivers, future investment in vehicles, and to clearly set rates that minimise the opportunity for overcharging or confusion.
- 1.5 The Tariff has to be displayed within all taxis to allow passengers to calculate the approximate cost of their journey. Section 4 of Torbay Council's Hackney Carriage Byelaws requires taximeters to be fitted in every licensed hackney carriage vehicle, which are calibrated and sealed. Once set, all drivers must display the maximum fare on their taximeter. This ensures consistency across all taxis and provides public confidence that the fare they are charged is correct.
- 1.6 In accordance with the statutory procedure set out in Section 65 of the LGMPA76, if no objections to the variation of the Tariff were received, or if all objections were withdrawn, the revised Tariff would have come into operation on the date of the expiration of the consultation period.

However, as objections were made and not withdrawn, the Council must consider the objections and set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the tariff shall come into force with or without further modifications.

- 1.7 The Table of Fares were advertised to come into effect on 1 October 2026, however the legislation requires that any tariff must come into force with or without further modifications, no later than two months from the expiration of the consultation period (4 September 2026), which is no later than 4 November 2026.

2. Consultation responses

- 2.1 A table showing the two consultation responses received can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 2.2 Neither of the two objectors proposed an alternative fare structure, however both objectors expressed opposition to any increase in taxi fares.
- 2.3 The proposed Table of Fares was developed following a request from the Torbay Licensed Taxi Association (TLTA). To facilitate agreement on the proposed revisions, the Licensing Department arranged meetings with representatives of the TLTA, the Torquay United Licensed Driver Association (TULDA) and other members of the hackney carriage trade. The resulting proposal reflects the outcome of those discussions.
- 2.4 There are currently 188 hackney carriage vehicle proprietors and 549 dual licensed drivers that can drive a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle. Therefore, only a very small percentage of licensees objected to the public consultation.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 A balance needs to be struck between the legitimate right of the trade to a viable and sustainable livelihood and the needs of the travelling public to have a safe and affordable service. The cost-of-living crisis has resulted in escalating vehicle purchase, maintenance and fuel costs. These costs are no longer absorbed through the existing Tariff. If the fares are not increased on a regular basis in line with inflation, then many potential drivers will be discouraged from entering or staying in the trade, leading to a shortage of supply and a decline in the quality of the service.
- 3.2 The proposed Tariff increase is a reasonable overall rise with an average overall rise of 4.6% for Tariff 1 and 3.8% for Tariff 2. The two additional tariffs for vehicles taking 5-8 passengers show a higher increase, however these costs have incorporated the current extra charges and will make the fare meter charge clearer for passengers.
- 3.3 It is considered that the proposed uplift will assist those taxi drivers licensed through the Council to face the rise in fuel costs and other cost of living rises and support Torbay's taxi trade to make a viable living, therefore reducing the number of drivers leaving the trade for better remunerated work and encouraging consideration of investment in newer environmentally friendly vehicles.

- 3.4 Cabinet must consider the two objections in Appendix 2 and decide whether to approve the Table of Fares as advertised or amend it. The determined Table of Fares must come into force on a date as agreed by Cabinet, which must be no later than two months after the original end date of the consultation. However, a two-week period ('call – in') is required for Councillors to request that any decision is reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Table of Fare stickers for every vehicle take at least two weeks to be printed, therefore it is recommended that the new Table of Fares comes into effect on 4 November 2026.

5. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial risks to the Council by increasing the taxi tariff.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council must ensure they follow the prescribed public consultation has outlined in this report to comply with section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

7. Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 As outlined above, the Council undertook a public consultation regarding the proposed amendments to the tariff. However, as objections have been made and not withdrawn, the matter must return to Cabinet to consider the objections and set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the Tariff shall come into force with or without further modifications.

8. Procurement Implications

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications.

9. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 9.1 There are no negative carbon footprint or other environmental implications resulting from amending/uplifting the Taxi Tariff. The proposed uplift should encourage members of the trade to invest in cleaner more efficient vehicles.

10. Associated Risks

- 10.1 There are no significant risks.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	These proposals are not intended to adversely impact on this client group. However, it is important to note that younger people may be disproportionately impacted as they may rely more on taxis for social and educational purposes. Older people may also be disproportionately impacted due to their increased reliance on taxis and the door-to-door service they provide. Public transport, including taxis play a crucial role in helping people to stay connected and maintain independence when they are unable to drive, and are therefore of particular significance to older residents aged over 65 and to younger people who may not have access to a car. Aging is linked with reduction in personal car use and are therefore more reliant on taxis especially as it is a door-to-door service. The availability of public transport is also very important to all adults and	There are grants available to support vulnerable groups to access transport. Low-income families, children with a special need or medical condition or if a child's school is more than 2 miles away may also be eligible for school transport. Existing home-to-school transport policies and support arrangements will continue to operate. The Council will continue to assess eligibility for transport assistance in accordance with statutory	N/A

		parents who do not have a car for work and social activities. Some children and young people, particularly those with SEND, Education Health and Care Plans, mobility difficulties or other vulnerabilities, rely on taxis to access education, training and activities. The Council recognises that increases in transport costs can have a disproportionate impact on families who rely on taxi transport where suitable alternatives are unavailable. However, statutory home-to-school transport arrangements are subject to separate assessment and funding arrangements and are not determined by the Hackney Carriage tariff alone. The proposal is not expected to prevent access to education but may increase transport costs for some families and organisations where taxi journeys are arranged privately. Maintaining a sustainable local taxi fleet supports the continued availability of transport options for children and young people who require specialist transport arrangements.	requirements. Families experiencing financial hardship may also be signposted to appropriate support services where appropriate.	
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	Carers are more likely to experience deprivation and therefore any rise in costs will have an impact on this group. They may also require a hackney carriage to travel with the person they are caring for or travel to support them.	Carers may be able to access funding to support transport costs.	N/A

Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	People with disabilities are more likely to be negatively impacted due to their reliance on taxis and the door-to-door service they provide. They are also more likely to experience financial difficulty/poverty. This includes SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students, although, as with other groups, the impact varies depending on how transport is funded. Any increases are likely to have an impact on the Local Authorities finances who fund the school transport provision. The Council have a register of all wheel chair accessible vehicles at <u>Helping disabled passengers - Torbay Council</u> However, maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage service is important to ensure continued availability of transport across Torbay. Without periodic tariff increases, there is a risk of reduced driver numbers and reduced service availability, which could have a greater adverse impact on groups that rely heavily on taxi services. The proposed increase is therefore considered proportionate, balancing affordability with the need to maintain a viable transport service.	There may be grants available to support vulnerable groups to access transport. Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same	The Department for Transport (DfT) FS13 report highlights how discrimination is part of daily life for trans people and generates 'behaviours of avoidance', particularly to	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

	as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	using public transport. This group tend to use taxis and private hire vehicles instead of other means of public transport and therefore may be more adversely impacted by any increase in fares. However, maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage service is important to ensure continued availability of transport across Torbay. Without periodic tariff increases, there is a risk of reduced driver numbers and reduced service availability, which could have a greater adverse impact on groups that rely heavily on taxi services. The proposed increase is therefore considered proportionate, balancing affordability with the need to maintain a viable transport service.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South-West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group. The DFT FS13 report identified that public transport plays a vital role in supporting social inclusion for many parents with young children and therefore they may be more adversely impacted by any increase in fares. However, maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage service is important to	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

	the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	ensure continued availability of transport across Torbay. Without periodic tariff increases, there is a risk of reduced driver numbers and reduced service availability, which could have a greater adverse impact on groups that rely heavily on taxi services. The proposed increase is therefore considered proportionate, balancing affordability with the need to maintain a viable transport service.		
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South-West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	The DFT FS13 report identifies that ‘people from BAME background are less likely to have access to a private vehicle, be more reliant on public transport to access employment. Furthermore ‘for many people from a BAME background having regular, affordable, clean and efficient transport is essential’. There is also evidence that individuals from a minority background are more likely to experience poverty and therefore any increase in fares will have an impact. However, maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage service is important to ensure continued availability of transport across Torbay. Without periodic tariff increases, there is a risk of reduced driver numbers and reduced service availability, which could have a greater adverse impact on groups that rely heavily on taxi services. The proposed increase is therefore considered proportionate, balancing affordability with the need to maintain a viable transport service.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	The DFT FS13 report identifies that certain groups of people, face an increasing risk of being victims of religious hate crime. For people who have a marked religious identity through clothing there is a heightened risk for harassment or discrimination. It is reported that this is particularly true for women who are already more vulnerable regardless of the way they dress. Therefore, any increase in fares will have an impact. People from certain faith communities may rely on taxi services where safety concerns, cultural considerations, accessibility needs or travel patterns influence transport choices. The Council recognises evidence that some people who display visible signs of their faith may experience harassment or discrimination whilst travelling and may therefore prefer door-to-door transport options. Any increase in taxi fares may therefore have a greater financial impact on some individuals. However, the proposal supports the continued availability of a regulated and licensed taxi service that can provide a safer transport option for many passengers. The increase is considered proportionate when balanced against the need to maintain a sustainable service that remains available to those who rely upon it.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	Females are more likely to experience poverty and are more likely to use taxis and other public transport. The DFT FS13 report identifies that 'as women are more likely than men to live on low incomes, work part time and undertake paid work in the home and in the community, such as being carers for dependent relatives, poor quality unreliable and expensive transport has a far bigger impact on the lives of women'. The report also identified that women may not have access to a car during the day as they 'either cannot afford one or the family car is being used by a partner'. The F13 report also identifies women make greater use of taxi's than men, increasing with age, where women over 70 make double the amount of trips than men. Any increase in fares may encourage more females to risk walking home at night or using unlicensed vehicles. A UK Survey Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated Licensing Officers and Police Officers by Plan International found that 62% of young women take taxis home at least monthly for safety reasons. Around 6 in 10 young women use taxis due to anxiety about other routes at night. 9 in 10 women report feeling unsafe walking alone after dark (www.gov.uk/government/speeches/women-and-girls-walking-safety).	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
-----	--	---	---	--

		The Council has considered concerns that higher fares could discourage some individuals from using licensed transport, potentially increasing personal safety risks. However, the proposed increase seeks to maintain a sustainable and regulated Hackney Carriage service which supports the continued availability of safe transport options. Failure to review fares in line with rising operating costs may reduce the availability of licensed drivers and vehicles, potentially creating greater risks for passengers. The proposed increase is therefore considered a proportionate response to rising operating costs whilst maintaining access to licensed transport services.		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	Recent research by the Department for Transport indicates perceptions of personal safety can significantly influence transport choices and that experiences of harassment, discrimination and anti-social behaviour may affect an individual's willingness to use public transport. Other research has found that LGBT+ individuals may experience heightened concerns about safety and harassment when travelling and may alter their travel behaviour as a result. Consequently, some LGBT+ individuals may be more reliant on taxis and private hire vehicles for travel, particularly where they receive these modes to be safer or more secure than other public transport.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

		Any increase in taxi fares could therefore have a disproportionate impact on these individuals. However, maintaining a viable taxi fleet supports continued access to licensed and regulated transport options for LGBT+ residents and visitors. The proposed increase is considered proportionate in supporting the long-term availability and reliability of these services.		
Veterans	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously serviced in the UK armed forces.	Some veterans could be negatively affected by taxi fare increases. This will depend on a number of factors, many of which link into the other categories such as sex, age, disability and socio-economic impacts.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)	The taxi tariff has to be raised to balance the legitimate right of the trade to a viable livelihood and the needs of the travelling public. The cost-of-living crisis has hit the taxi trade hard most notably through the escalating vehicle purchase, maintenance and fuel costs. These costs	The Council recognises that increases in transport costs can disproportionately affect people on low incomes, people experiencing deprivation and households already impacted by cost-of-living pressures. Taxis may represent a significant expense for some residents but are often an essential transport option where public transport is unavailable, inaccessible or unsuitable. The proposed tariff increase may therefore increase financial pressures for some individuals	Existing support arrangements relating to home-to-school transport, social care transport and other statutory transport assistance schemes will continue to operate. The Council will continue to signpost residents experiencing financial	N/A

	are no longer absorbed through the existing tariff.	and families, particularly those who rely on taxis to access employment, education, healthcare, caring responsibilities and essential services. However, the Council must also consider the sustainability of the Hackney Carriage trade. Vehicle purchase costs, maintenance costs, insurance premiums and fuel costs have all increased significantly since the previous tariff review. Failure to maintain a viable fare structure could result in fewer licensed drivers and vehicles operating within Torbay, reducing transport availability for the residents who depend on these services most. The proposed increase seeks to achieve a balanced and proportionate approach by supporting both service affordability and service availability.	hardship towards appropriate support services where available. [Taxi Tariff Word]	
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	N/A	Access to affordable transport is an important determinant of health and wellbeing. Taxi services support access to healthcare, social activities, employment, education and community participation. If transport becomes unaffordable, some residents may experience increased social isolation or difficulty accessing essential services. However, maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage fleet also contributes positively to public health by ensuring transport remains available to those who need it, particularly older people, disabled	N/A	N/A

		people and vulnerable residents. The proposal seeks to balance affordability with the continued availability of services.		
Human Rights impacts	There are no human rights impact with regards to the taxi tariff.	Consideration has been given to the Human Rights Act 1998. The proposal may engage Article 8 (respect for private and family life) where individuals rely on taxi transport to maintain family relationships, access healthcare, participate in community life or remain socially connected. The proposal may also engage Article 2 of Protocol 1 (right to education) where taxi transport forms part of a child's access to education. However, the proposed tariff increase is considered proportionate and justified, reflecting increased operating costs and the need to maintain a viable and accessible Hackney Carriage service. Existing statutory transport duties, safeguarding arrangements and support mechanisms remain in place and are not altered by this proposal. The Council therefore considers any interference with Convention rights to be limited, proportionate and justified in pursuit of a legitimate aim.	N/A	N/A
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care	The Council has considered this proposal in the context of its Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Care experienced children and young people are more likely to experience financial disadvantage, poorer health outcomes and barriers to accessing education, employment and social	N/A	N/A

	experienced children and young people.	opportunities. Some may rely on taxis for contact arrangements, education, health appointments or independent living activities. Whilst any increase in fares could have a greater financial impact where journeys are privately funded, the proposal is not expected to create significant barriers to access because statutory support arrangements remain in place where applicable. Maintaining a sustainable Hackney Carriage service also supports the availability of transport options that care experienced young people may need to access services and opportunities.		
FS13: Future of Transport - Equalities and access to opportunity - rapid evidence review (publishing.service.gov.uk)				

12. Cumulative Council Impact

None

13. Cumulative Community Impacts

None

