



# City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

**Meeting or Decision Maker:** Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Licensing

**Date:** 5 October 2020

**Classification:** General Release

**Title:** Response to Petition entitled Against Increase in Street Trading charges

**Wards Affected:** Church Street

**Key Decision:** No

**Report of:** Raj Mistry Executive Director of Environment and City Management

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 At the Full Council, held on Wednesday 16 September, Councillor Aicha Less presented a Petition signed by street traders from Church Street market.

1.2 The Petition is titled Against Increase in Street Trading charges

The Petition reads:- *‘During these unprecedented times due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it is unreasonable to expect traders to not be affected by these rises, when trade is being negatively affected by the crisis. Following on from receipt of this petition, we implore the council to reconsider these rises and respond to the signees by the end of September 2020’*

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Cabinet Member agrees the letter attached in Appendix 1, in response to the petition tabled by Cllr Less.

### **3. Reasons for Decision**

**3.1** To respond to the petition in accordance with the Council Policy on responding to petitions.

### **4. Background, including Policy Context**

**4.1** In 2018, the City Council undertook a review of fees and charges associated with trading on the markets in Westminster. Following the review, a consultation took place with market traders and the groups representing traders. Then in November a report outlining the outcome of the consultation and a proposal to increase market fees was submitted to the Full Licensing Committee for consideration. A link to both of these documents can be found here.

**4.2** The fee review paper proposed a number of options and the Committee agreed an increase in a tapered way over a two year period, of £16 Monday – Thursday and £22 Friday and Saturday in year one, rising to £22 across all days in year two, that had the agreement of 55% of traders responding to the consultation, was the best option.

**4.3** This tapered approach was to allow for a transitional period for traders to prepare. These daily charges are for recovery of costs only associated with cleansing, waste collection and costs of administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Act.

**4.4** The first of these increases was applied to all existing traders on the 1 April 2019 and the second increase was to follow on 1 April 2020.

**4.5** On 25 March, in response to the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Regulations, the council made the decision to delay the implementation of the fee increase, to be reviewed in June. At the same time a decision was made to waive the daily charges for Street Traders until the end of April. When this decision was reviewed at the end of April and it was agreed that the waiver should continue for those street traders that were restricted from trading as a result of the Coronavirus Regulations throughout May.

**4.6** Subsequently, the Government announced that all market traders could begin trading again on the 1 June and all non-essential traders from 15 June, therefore at the end of May the decision to waive fees was reviewed, the outcome was to stop granting waivers for traders, other than in accordance with the street trading policy and for those that were able to show that they were shielding in accordance with government guidelines.

**4.7** At the same time the decision to delay the fee increase was reviewed and it was decided to implement the fee increase from 1 July.

**4.8** We continue to work closely with market traders to continuously improve the provision across our markets. From signage, broadband connectivity, promotional campaigns and facility upgrades we will continue to prioritise investment in markets as a core part of Westminster's local economy.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

Andrew Ralph – aralph@westminster.gov.uk

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

*None*



Councillor Less

Andrew Ralph  
Head of Licensing & Regulatory Services

By email

Tel: 07801915532  
aralph@westminster.gov.uk

Date: XX October 2020

Dear Councillor, Less

**Petition: Against Increase in Street Trading charges.**

Thank you for bringing the petition to Full Council, held on Wednesday 16 September 2020.

In 2018, the City Council undertook a review of fees and charges associated with trading on the markets in Westminster. Following the review, a consultation took place with market traders and the groups representing traders. Then in November 2018 a report outlining the outcome of the consultation and a proposal to increase market fees was submitted to the Full Licensing Committee for consideration. A link to both of these documents can be found here.

The fee review paper proposed a number of options and the Committee agreed an increase in a tapered way over a two year period, of £16 Monday – Thursday and £22 Friday and Saturday in year one, rising to £22 across all days in year two, that had the agreement of 55% of traders responding to the consultation, was the best option.

This tapered approach was to allow for a transitional period for traders to prepare. These daily charges are for recovery of costs only associated with cleansing, waste collection and costs of administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Act.

The first of these increases was applied to all existing traders on the 1 April 2019 and the second increase was to follow in 1 April 2020.

On 25 March 2020, in response to the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Regulations, the council made the decision to delay the implementation of the fee increase, to be reviewed in June 2020. At the same time a decision was made to waive the daily charges for Street Traders until the end of April 2020.

When this decision was reviewed at the end of April 2020 and it was agreed that the waiver should continue for those street traders that were restricted from trading as a result of the Coronavirus Regulations throughout May 2020.

Subsequently, the Government announced that all market traders could begin trading again on the 1 June and all non-essential traders from 15 June, therefore at the end of May the decision to waive fees was reviewed, the outcome was to stop granting waivers for traders, other than in accordance with the street trading policy and for those that were able to show that they were shielding in accordance with government guidelines.

At the same time the decision to delay the fee increase was reviewed and it was decided to implement the fee increase from 1 July 2020.

We continue to work closely with market traders to improve the provision across our markets. From signage, broadband connectivity, promotional campaigns and facility upgrades we will continue to prioritise investment in markets as integral to Westminster's local economy.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Ralph

Head of Licensing & Regulatory Service

Public Protection & Licensing