

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

**Date 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**1. Taxi Tariffs – Proposed Increase**

**Submitted by:** **Head of Environmental Health Services & Licensing  
Administration Team Manager**

**Portfolio:** **Finance & Resources**

**Ward(s) affected:** **All**

**Purpose of the Report**

For Members to consider the Hackney Carriage Trade Association's request to increase the Council set maximum metered tariffs and amend the times for the proposed tariffs.

**Recommendations**

- 1. That Members approve or amend the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages;**
- 2. That Members approve the proposed Table of metered fares to be advertised and implemented in line with statutory provisions.**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976 provides that a District Council may fix the rates or fares within the district in connection with the hire of a Hackney Carriage providing the proposed increase is published in at least one local newspaper, setting out the proposed variation and allowing a period no less than 14 days, from the first date of publication, for objections. The District Council must also deposit a copy of this notice at the offices of the Council and make it available for public inspection at all reasonable hours when open without payment.
- 1.2 The current table of fares approved by the Council was set in 2008 and has not been varied since. A copy can be found at **Appendix A**. In October 2015 the Hackney Carriage Trade Association ("Trade association") made a request that the commencement time for tariff 2 should be amended from midnight to 22.00hrs. At a meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 the Committee resolved to reject the proposed change. An extract from the minutes is attached at **Appendix B**.

**2. Issues**

- 2.1 The Licensing Department have received a request from the Trade Association to increase the metered fares and amend the times of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's licensed Hackney Carriages. At a meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018 the Trade association submitted a proposed table of fares. Following subsequent meetings and correspondence Officers drafted a new proposed table of fares which has the agreement of the Trade association Committee and their members. A copy of the proposal is attached as **Appendix C**.
  - 2.2 There is a national fares league table compiled by the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine every month with places based on the cost to a customer to travel two
- Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

miles on the local authorities' cheapest tariff. According to the table the national average for the first two miles is £5.90. NULBC currently sit in 358<sup>th</sup> place from 362 local authorities. The four Local Authorities below NULBC in the league table do not set tariffs. These four Councils allow their Hackney Carriages to set prices for each individual journey. A copy of the July table is attached at **Appendix D**.

2.3 A review was carried out by Officers against the below neighbouring local authorities:

- Stoke City Council;
- Cheshire East Council (Congleton);
- Cheshire East Council (Crewe and Nantwich);
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and
- Stafford Borough Council.

Table 1 below shows the comparison between the Council's current set of fares, the proposed set of fares and the other local authorities for 1 mile and 2 miles under tariffs 1 and 2. A full comparison is attached as **Appendix E**.

Table 1:

<u>Council and place in PHTM table</u>	<u>Tariff 1</u>	<u>Tariff 1</u>	<u>Tariff 2</u>	<u>Tariff 2</u>
	<u>1 mile</u>	<u>2 mile</u>	<u>1 mile</u>	<u>2 mile</u>
NuLBC (current) - 358	2.90	4.20	3.92	5.57
Stoke CC - 331	3.30	4.95	4.40	6.60
CEC – Congleton - 316	3.10	5.10	4.60	7.60
SMDC - 314	3.70	5.20	5.30	7.80
Stafford - 263	4.00	5.45	6.00	8.18
<b>NuLBC (Proposed) - 251</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>5.55</b>	<b>5.20</b>	<b>7.40</b>
CEC – Crewe - 78	4.40	6.40	4.60	6.60

2.4 A number of changes have been put forward as part of the proposal, with a view to simplifying the structure, and they include:

- Breaking the fare table down into the separate tariffs;
- Increasing the flag (starting) fares;
- Altering the flag distance from 780/800 yards (depending on tariff) to 800 yards (5/11ths of a mile);
- Altering the extra charge distances from 140/160/176 yards (depending on tariff) to 160 yards (1/11th of a mile);
- Clarification as to when each tariff would apply.

2.5 The purpose of altering the distances is to change the currently arbitrary distances to those that reflect 1/11ths of a mile making it easier to calculate what the correct fare should be.

2.6 The proposed changes to the Table of Fares, if approved, would apply to all Hackney Carriages licensed by Newcastle-under-Lyme BC.

2.7 Where a journey starts and ends within the Borough it is an offence to charge more than the maximum metered fare for the time/distance approved by the Council. A fixed price can be agreed before the journey commences but it can not exceed the maximum metered fare.

2.8 Where a journey ends outside of the Borough it is an offence to charge more than the maximum metered fare for the journey unless an agreement to pay more has been made in advance of the hiring. If there is no pre-agreement then the driver must not charge more than the maximum metered fare for that journey.

### 3. **Options Considered**

3.1 That Members consider the options outlined below:

- To approve the proposed Table of metered fares, at Appendix C (**RECOMMENDED**); or
- To amend the proposed Table of metered fares, at Appendix C; and
- To approve that the proposed Table of metered fares, at Appendix C, be advertised and implemented in line with statutory provisions; (**RECOMMENDED**).

### 4. **Proposal**

4.1. That Members approve or amend the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages;

4.2. That Members approve for the proposed Table of metered fares, at Appendix C, to be advertised and implemented in line with statutory provisions.

### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The table of fares have not been increased since 2008 and the Council's tariffs are the lowest in the UK.

### 6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

6.1 *The Council's corporate priorities are:*

- Local services that work for local people
- Growing our people and places
- A healthy, active and safe borough
- A town centre for all

### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 There are no statutory requirements on the Council to have a Table of metered fares for Hackney Carriages however once in place it forms the basis of the maximum fares that drivers of Hackney Carriages are permitted to charge.

### 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 Not applicable

### 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Not applicable

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 Not applicable

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 Not applicable

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 Not applicable

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 Public Protection Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix A – Current Table of Metered Fares  
Appendix B – Extract of minutes from 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015  
Appendix C – Proposed Table of Metered Fares  
Appendix D – Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine league table for July  
Appendix E – Neighbouring Authority Comparison Table – July 2019

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 Current Hackney Carriage Table of metered fares