

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

29 April 2024

Report Title: Taxi Tariffs – Proposed Increase

Submitted by: Service Director - Regulatory Services & Licensing Administration
Team Manager

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centre & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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; and 3. That Members approve that following the consultation period the Table of metered fares are sent to Cabinet for ratification. 			
<u>Reasons</u>			
A request has been received from the Hackney Carriage Trade Association to increase the Council set maximum metered tariffs and amend the times for the proposed tariffs.			

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 2019 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 3rd November 2015 the Committee resolved to reject the proposed change. An extract from the minutes is attached at **Appendix B**. In August 2019 the Trade Association again requested that the commencement time for tariff 2 should be amended from midnight to 22.00hrs. At a meeting on 29th August 2019 the Committee resolved to reject the proposed change. An extract from the minutes is attached at **Appendix C**.

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. A copy of the request is attached as **Appendix D** which details that there has been 5 years since the last set of tariffs were implemented in which time costs for fuel, insurance premiums, vehicle maintenance and replacement vehicles have all increased. It also includes an explanation as to why the trade is proposing that the tariff 2 start time be brought forward from midnight to 22.00 hours.
- 2.2** In 2023 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 E**.
- 2.3** There is a national fares league table compiled by the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine (PHTM) every month with places based on the cost to a customer to travel two miles on the local authorities' cheapest tariff. NULBC currently sit in 328th place from 344 local authorities. The bottom four Local Authorities 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 April 2024 table is attached at **Appendix F**.
- 2.4** A review has been carried out against the table of fares for Stoke-on-Trent City Council who last amended their fares in March 2022. Table 1 below shows the comparison between the Council's current set of fares, the proposed set of fares and for Stoke-on-Trent City Council for 1 mile and 2 miles under tariffs 1 and 2.

Table1:

<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) - 328/344	3.90	5.55	5.20	7.40
Stoke CC – 313/344	4.10	5.90	5.30	7.70
NuLBC (Proposed) – 184/344	4.70	6.90	6.00	8.75
Proposed Percentage Increase	20.5%	24.3%	15.4%	18.2%

- 2.5** A number of changes have been put forward as part of the proposal:
- Increasing the flag fares on each tariff;
 - Increase the additional distance charges on each tariff;
 - Amending the start time of tariff 2 from midnight to 22:00;
 - Increasing the soiling charge fee;
 - Additional notes for customers.
- 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 cannot 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. Recommendation

- 3.1** That Members approve or amend the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages, which can be found at Appendix D; including
- 3.1.1** To approve or amend the proposed flag fares;
 - 3.1.2** To approve or amend the proposed additional distance charges;
 - 3.1.3** To approve or amend the proposed start time for tariff 2 from midnight to 22.00 hours;
 - 3.1.4** To approve or amend the proposed soiling charge;
 - 3.1.5** To approve or amend the additional notes on the tariff sheet.
- 3.2** That Members approve the proposed Table of metered fares, which can be found at Appendix D, to be advertised and implemented in line with statutory provisions; and
- 3.3** That Members approve that following the consultation period the Table of metered fares, which can be found at Appendix D, are sent to Cabinet for ratification.

4. Reasons

- 4.1** The table of fares have not been increased since 2019 and the Council's tariffs in the bottom 6% of all UK local authorities.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1** That if Members do not wish to approve the proposed table of fares, then they can:
- Amend the proposed fares, approve that the amended fares be consulted upon and then sent to Cabinet to be ratified; or
 - Reject the proposed fares with a view that an amended proposal be submitted for consideration at a future meeting.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1** 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.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1** Not applicable

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1** Not applicable

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1** Not applicable

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 Not applicable

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 Public Protection Committee – 3rd November 2015

12.2 Public Protection Committee – 20th August 2019

13. List of Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix A – Current Table of Metered Fares
- Appendix B – Extract of minutes from 3rd November 2015
- Appendix C – Extract of minutes from 20th August 2019
- Appendix D – Trade request email
- Appendix E – Proposed Table of Metered Fares
- Appendix F – Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine league table for April 2024

14. Background Papers

14.1 Current Hackney Carriage Table of metered fares