

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

04 June 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 Cabinet Members to ratify the Licensing & Public Protection Committee decision to amend the Council set maximum metered tariffs for Hackney Carriages.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
1. That Members approve or amend the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages;			
<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. On 29 th April 2024 the Licensing & Public Protection Committee agreed the proposed tariffs, however the setting of these is an Executive function and requires Cabinet approval.			

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. This consultation has taken place, ending on 18th May 2024. No comments were received.
- 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**. On 29th April 2024 the Licensing & Public Protection Committee agreed a set of proposed tariffs submitted by the Hackney Carriage Trade Association. The setting of these is an Executive function and requires Cabinet approval.

2. Issues

- 2.1 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. It is this set of fares that have been approved by the Licensing & Public Protection Committee.

- 2.2** 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 B**.
- 2.3** 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%

- 2.4** A number of changes were 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.
- 2.5** The Licensing & Public Protection Committee agreed with all of the proposed amendments with the exception of the time that tariff 2 would start. Instead of starting at 22:00 hours are proposed the decision was to start it at 23:00 hours instead.
- 2.6** The proposed changes to the Table of Fares, if approved, would apply to all Hackney Carriages licensed by Newcastle-under-Lyme BC and would come into force from 10th June 2024. A copy of the tariffs to be determined by Cabinet is attached as **Appendix C**.
- 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 Cabinet Members approve the proposed variation of the Table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages as detailed in Appendix C;

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 Cabinet do not wish to approve the proposed table of fares, then they can:
- Amend the proposed fares; 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
 12.3 Licensing & Public Protection Committee – 29th April 2024

13. List of Appendices

- 13.1** Appendix A – Current Table of Metered Fares
Appendix B – Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine league table for April 2024
Appendix C – Proposed Table of Metered Fares

14. Background Papers

- 14.1** Current Hackney Carriage Table of metered fares (Appendix A)