



# Northumberland

## County Council

### LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 JUNE 2022

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### Hackney Carriage Tariff

Report of Philip Soderquest, Director of Housing and Public Protection

Cabinet Member: Cllr. Colin Horncastle – Portfolio Holder Community Services

#### Purpose of report

To update Members on the formal consultation that was undertaken with the Hackney Carriage Trade, on whether there should be changes to the current hackney carriage table of fares.

#### Recommendations

Members note the contents of the report, consider the responses received and determine whether to:

- Implement the table of fares as proposed, without modification.

or

- Modify the proposed table of fares, and if so, agree a new table of fares

and

- Set a date upon which the agreed fares shall come into effect, which in any event must be no later than the 6 July 2022

#### Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Living and Enjoying priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

#### Key issues

1. The Council is responsible under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Act) for the “Fixing of fares for hackney carriages” which represents, when the vehicle is operated within its licensing zone, the maximum fare that may be charged.

Zone – Refers to the geographical area within which a hackney carriage is licensed to operate. In the case of Northumberland, there are six hackney carriage zones, which are co-terminus with the former district council geographical boundaries.

2. The tariffs were reviewed in 2018 where the previous 6 different set of tariffs which were connected to the zones were merged and one set was created to cover the whole of the County.
3. The current table of fares is made up of six separate tariffs. Three tariffs relate to vehicle for up to 4 passengers, the remaining three tariffs cover larger vehicles carrying 5 to 8 passengers.
4. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the Licensing and Regulatory Committee resolved to increase all 6 tariffs with an increase of 5%, to be reviewed in one year.
5. The proposed tariff increase, as required by the Act, was advertised in the local newspapers, requesting responses be received by 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The Licensing section received 5 representations from the licensed trade stating that the increase was not adequate, and a further representation from Berwick Taxi Association.
6. In addition to the statutory requirement to “publish” the fares in at least one local newspaper, the Licensing Service also notified individual members of the “trade” of the proposed increase, and in doing so invited comment from them.

### **Background**

7. Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 65, the Council has the power to determine the charges that may be made in respect of journeys undertaken in a hackney carriage.
8. There are 4 elements in relation to the setting of a tariff: Timing of the tariffs, flag fall, intervals at which fare increases and extra charges.

**Timing** – this refers to the hours and/or days when a particular tariff will be applied

**Flag fall** – the minimum amount that a journey will cost from start to the first interval increase

**Interval increase** – the amount the charge increases when a set distance has been travelled

**Extra Charges** – additional charges not directly associated with the length of the journey, such as cleaning.

9. Following Local Government reorganisation in 2009 hackney carriage licensing was spilt into 6 zones covering the 6 former districts. Separate tariffs were in place for these 6 zones until a review of the tariffs in 2018.
10. In 2018 an extensive review of the tariffs was conducted. It merged all 6 sets of tariffs into one set which covered all of Northumberland. Due to the way the tariffs had been previously formulated it meant that for some zones there was a significant

increase while for others it was modest. The current set of tariffs is attached as **Appendix A.**

11. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the Licensing Committee resolved to increase all 6 tariffs with an increase of 5%, to be reviewed in one year.

12. In order to vary the hackney carriage tariffs a notice was published in the local press, specifying the date the new tariff is to come into effect (6<sup>th</sup> May 2022), and as previously stated, individual members of the trade were notified of the proposed increase and invited to comment - **Appendix B.**

13. In response to the consultation exercise, only five representations were received on or before the 5 May, and post a meeting with officers and the Berwick Taxi Drivers Association, a further response was received - **Appendix C.**

14. In accordance with the Act, the Council must consider the representations and determine whether to implement the proposed fare increase without modification, or to amend it, and set a new date, within 2 months of the original date, for the implementation of the agreed tariff.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 65, gives the council the legal authority to review and set the fares for hackney carriages. This also includes the requirements and method of consultation, which has been exceeded.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	N/A
<b>Legal</b>	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 65, gives the council the legal authority to review and set the fares for hackney carriages. This also includes the requirements and method of consultation, which has been exceeded.
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

<b>Risk Assessment</b>	N/A
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Before making changes to tariff consultation with those affected is required to take place.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	All

**Background papers:**

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	Phil Soderquest
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Colin Horncastle

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**Appendix A**

Current Hackney Carriage Tariff

**Appendix B**

Copy of press notice

**Appendix C**

Trade responses received and additional comments.