



# Northumberland County Council

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

## Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

**Report of Councillor** Councillor Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities

**Responsible Officer** Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection

### 1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

Licensing hackney carriages cuts across all of the priorities included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- It supports **Achieving Value for Money** by ensuring the licensing scheme works efficiently and delivers the best customer experience.
- It supports **Tackling Inequalities** by ensuring the licensing scheme is delivered taking into account the needs of our communities.
- It supports **Driving Economic Growth** by ensuring the licensing scheme meets the needs to support the county to prosper.

### 2. Purpose of report

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

This report sets out the law applying to the setting of fares for hackney carriages and provides the outcome of the annual review undertaken by officers.

### 3. Recommendations

Committee is recommended to agree that there be no change to the table of fares applying to hackney carriages in Northumberland.

#### 4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

Not applicable.

#### 5. **Background**

##### 5.1 Introduction

Northumberland County Council ('the Authority') is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriages in its local area. One of those statutory duties is to set the maximum fares that can be charged and all other charges in connection with a hire.

##### 5.2 Context

Under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ('the 1976 Act'), local licensing authorities have the power to determine the charges that may be made in respect of journeys undertaken in a hackney carriage. These are expressed in a table of fares, commonly known as the taxi tariff, which sets out the *maximum* prices that can be charged.

The Authority has no control over what fares are charged for private hire services, that being a matter for negotiation between the hirer and the operator. Where a hackney carriage is being used to provide private hire services, the fare cannot exceed those amounts included in the table of fares.

The table of fares in place in Northumberland is included in **Appendix 1** to this report. There are four key elements:

- The day or time of day
- The flag fall
- Intervals at which the fare increases
- Additional charges that can be levied.

The Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy ('the Policy') commits the Authority to reviewing its table of fares annually, or more frequently taking into account emerging circumstances - in other words the economic climate. The last review was undertaken in February 2024 leading to no changes being made.

If the Authority proposes to vary the table of fares for hackney carriages, the 1976 Act requires it to:

- Place a notice in at least one local newspaper setting out the variation, and
- Allow a period of at least 14 days within which objections to the variation can be made.

### 5.3 Annual review

Committee will be aware of the recent inflationary impacts on the cost of all goods and services due to international trading conditions. Prices have undoubtedly risen and that will of course impact directly on the local hackney carriage trade.

The cost of taxi services however is highly price sensitive to the cost of fuel. **Appendix 2** includes information about weekly road fuel price trends from January 2020 to January 2025. The cost of petrol and diesel is at its lowest point since January 2023. At that time, Committee resolved to increase the table of fares by 5%, with no variation being proposed the following year as fuel prices fell back.

The Authority has not received any representations from the trade seeking a variation at this time although dialogue is continuing to take place.

### 5.4 Next steps

It is proposed that no changes are made to the Authority's table of fares as a result of this annual review. However, officers will continue to monitor market conditions shaped by any proposals put forward by the trade in continuing discussions.

## 6. **Options open to Committee and reasons for the recommendations**

- 6.1 The recommendation at section 3 of this report invites Committee to make no change to the table of fares for hackney carriages.
- 6.2 Section 5.3 highlights the reasons for the recommendation.

## 7. **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	There are no policy implications arising directly from this report. The Policy as it relates to the setting of hackney carriage fares is set out in the main body of the report.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The costs of undertaking the annual review and associated matters are met from existing revenue budgets.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The legal framework as it relates to the setting of hackney carriage fares is set out in the main body of the report.
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

<b>Human resources</b>	There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.
<b>Property</b>	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
<b>The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?</b>	Not required. Assessing compliance with the public sector equality duty are considered specifically in relation to the administration and enforcement of the licensing activity.
<b>Risk assessment</b>	Risks associated with administering and enforcing the licensing activity are managed and monitored through the corporately adopted risk management framework and within the Public Protection Service.
<b>Crime and disorder</b>	There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.
<b>Customer considerations</b>	There are no customer consideration implications arising directly from this report.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising directly from this report.
<b>Wards</b>	All Wards

## 8. Background papers

**Appendix 1:** Northumberland Table of Fares

**Appendix 2:** Weekly road fuel prices – long term trend chart

[Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976, section 65](#)

[Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, updated June 2024](#)

[Petrol and diesel prices, January 2025 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

## 9. Links to other key reports already published

Not applicable

**10. Author and Contact Details**

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