



North Devon Council

Report Date: 4 July 2022

Topic: Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff Review

Report by: Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 North Devon Council has set maximum chargeable fares for taxis under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which directly impact the salaries of taxi drivers licensed in the district. A consultation on a proposed change to the tariff has been undertaken and this report seeks to recommend adoption of new North Devon Council Authorised Maximum Fares for Licensed Hackney Carriages (the hackney tariff).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Strategy and Resources Committee approve a recommendation made by Licensing and Community Safety Committee during their meeting of the 14 June 2022, namely that:

2.1.1 The current table of hackney carriage maximum fares is modified in line with **Appendix A**.

2.1.2 Additionally it is recommended that this tariff becomes effective on the 11 July 2022, and the words 'fare price' are changed to 'total fare' to provide absolute clarity in respect of the fuel surcharge listed under the extras.

3 REASONS

3.1 To consider representations from the taxi trade and public received in respect of the Council's hackney carriage fare tariff.

3.2 To take into consideration the increase in the CPI since the hackney tariff became effective.

3.3 It is believed that a valet charge of £100 is proportionate with likely cleaning costs, and downtime not being able to take subsequent fares.

3.4 Provide the ability to readily react to fuel price surges and a volatile marketplace.

There is currently only one horse drawn carriage in operation locally. In light of this and the fact that this tariff is in essence for pleasure rides, it is believed that an increase of 50p per minute is justified.

- 3.5 Amendment of night rate to commence at 9pm, to better align the commencement time with other authorities across Devon.

4 REPORT

- 4.1 North Devon Council's current hackney carriage fare tariff became effective in April 2016. Subsequent to its implementation two reviews have taken place in November 2016, and February 2019 during which decisions were taken that any amendment was not justified at that time.
- 4.2 A significant period of time has now passed and it is necessary to undertake a further review. Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables the Council to set fares for hackney carriage vehicles and requires that before any alteration to the tariff table can take effect a public notice explaining the changes must be placed in a local newspaper. The public then must be provided with a period of at least 14 days to make comment on the proposals. If no adverse comment/objection is received, the approved changes must take effect. Alternatively, if adverse comment/objection is received then the matter must be returned to allow the Committee to consider the representation(s). Any tariff as existing or amended must come into effect within two months of the date of the public notice, being the 25 July 2022.
- 4.4 A public notice was published in the North Devon Gazette in line with the above. Moreover, a press release was issued, a consultation survey launched on the Council's website, and a Council taxi newsletter explaining the changes and inviting observations was sent to the trade. **Appendix B** lists the 30 responses received.
- 4.5 The recommended tariff and that which was advertised, contains the following amends:
- a 12.3% increase across the table with the exception of waiting time (in line with the CPI increase since the tariff became effective in April 2016).
 - an increased valet charge to £100.00.
 - an increased fare for non-motorised vehicles from £1.50 to £2.00 a minute.

- an amendment/no amendment to the commencement of tariff 2 and 5 (night rate).

- an extra charge of 10p added to the fare price when the South West average price of fuel oil exceeds £1.75 per litre based on the latest available AA Fuel Price Report with a further 10p added for each subsequent increase of 10p per litre.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of newspaper advertisement have been met by way of the Council's existing budget, realised through its licence fees.
- 4.2 The Council's hackney carriage tariff directly impacts the licensed trade by way of the maximum fares that they are able to charge.
- 4.3 The current tariff was effective in April 2016, and it appears to now be an appropriate time to review the fares given recent significant rises in CPI. It is however recognised that raising the cost of fares too greatly may adversely impact the ability of vulnerable users to be able to afford this essential service.

5 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The impact of the proposals will depend on any increase approved. Should the Council set the fare too low this may adversely affect the supply of taxis in the area. Whilst setting the fare too high may have a negative impact on the vulnerable users of this essential service, for example protected groups including the disabled who rely on taxis as a principle form of transport. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 An Environmental Assessment has demonstrated no impacts to highlight as part of this report.

7 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 7.1 What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:
 - 7.1.1 The commercialisation agenda: Reviewing the tariff and making an increase of fares will have a general impact on the cost of taxi journeys across the district. Taxi fares have a direct impact on the taxi drivers, operators and proprietors of licensed vehicles by way of the remuneration provided through the journeys taken by the public and there is a similar impact on individuals and businesses

using taxis for these journeys which may be pleasure or business related.

7.1.2 Improving customer focus and/or: Reviewing the tariff and making careful consideration of those representations gained will ensure there is appropriate customer focus.

7.1.3 Regeneration or economic development: Reviewing the tariff and making an increase of fares will have a general impact on the cost of taxi journeys across the district. Taxi fares have a direct impact on the taxi drivers, operators and proprietors of licensed vehicles by way of the remuneration provided through the journeys taken by the public and there is a similar impact on individuals and businesses using taxis for these journeys which may be pleasure or business related.

8 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

8.1 Article of Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph:1h

8.2 Referred or delegated power?: Delegated.

9 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

- North Devon Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy March 2022
- Private Hire and Taxi Monthly (www.phtm.co.uk/taxi-fares-league-tables)
- Office for National Statistics Consumer Prices Index <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices#dataset>

11 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

11.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager. 21.06.2022