

To: General Purposes Licensing Committee

Date: 25 September 2023

Report of: Head of Service Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Title of Report: Application for Variation (increase) of the current Hackney Carriage Tariffs (table of fares)

Summary and recommendations

Purpose of report: To consider an application for a variation of the current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares

Corporate Priority: Enable an Inclusive Economy

Recommendation(s): That the General Purposes Licensing Committee resolves to:

1. **Consider** the application for a variation to the current Hackney Carriage table of fares in accordance with the information contained within this report; and
2. **Instruct** the Licensing team to liaise with the applicant, the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association, to amend the proposed table of fares, addressing the view of Oxford City Council Licensing and the views of the General Purposes Licensing (GPL) Committee; and
3. **Delegate** to the Chair and Vice Chair of the GPL committee to consider any amendments to the table of fares; and
4. **Instruct** the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance to carry out the statutory requirement of a public consultation on the proposed table of fares variation; and
3. **Delegate** to the Chair and the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety to consider any response to the proposed variation.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Application for variation of Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
Appendix 2	Methodology for Calculating the Proposed Fare Variation
Appendix 3	Current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
Appendix 4	Proposed Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
Appendix 5	Hackney Carriage Table of Fares from other Licensing Authorities

Introduction and background

1. On 20th February 2023, the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (“COLTA”) submitted an application requesting to vary the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares by:
 - a. increasing the tariffs by an average of 5.6%, and;
 - b. increasing the additional charges by an average of 70%, and;
 - c. removing the restriction of the highest Tariff (Tariff Three) from the Christmas and New Year period only, to allow its usage every day between 02:00 and 06:00 hours.

A copy of the application outlining reasons for the requested variation can be found at **Appendix One**.

2. The application states that the variation has been submitted to:

“recover the significant cost increases suffered since early 2021 (in a significant increase in RPI).”

And;

“anticipate the costs involved to modernise the vehicle fleet so that new emission controls within the City can be achieved.”

3. Under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Council may set the fares for Hackney Carriages within its area. The section sets out the parameters for fixing and amending the fares/tariffs for licensed hackney carriages by the Council, this includes the requirement of a public consultation and consideration of any response.
4. The Council may not set fares for journeys outside its area. The fare for journeys ending outside the area may be negotiated separately between the hirer and driver but are outside the control of the Council.

Application for the Variation of Hackney Carriage Table of Fares

5. The effect of the proposed variation when comparing it with the current table of fares can be found below:

Length of journey (miles)	TARIFF ONE			TARIFF TWO			TARIFF THREE		
	Current Fare £	Proposed Fare £	Increase %	Current Fare £	Proposed Fare £	Increase %	Current Fare £	Proposed Fare £	Increase %
1.0	5.80	6.20	6.9	6.20	6.40	3.2	6.75	6.75	0
2.0	7.50	8.20	9.3	8.60	8.80	2.3	9.75	9.75	0
3.0	9.20	10.20	10.9	10.30	10.80	4.9	12.75	12.75	0
4.0	10.90	12.20	11.9	12.00	12.80	6.7	15.75	15.75	0
5.0	13.90	15.50	11.5	15.00	16.10	7.3	18.75	19.05	1.6
10.0	28.90	32.00	10.7	30.00	32.60	8.7	33.75	35.55	5.3
	Average Percentage Increase		10.2%	Average Percentage Increase		5.5%	Average Percentage Increase		1.15%

Additional Charge	TARIFF ONE			TARIFF TWO			TARIFF THREE		
	Current Charge £	Proposed Charge £	Increase %	Current Fare £	Proposed Fare £	Increase %	Current Fare £	Proposed Fare £	Increase %
Soilage Charge	50.0	70.0	40	50.0	70.0	40	50.0	70.0	40
Carriage of each pedal cycle	1.00	2.00	100	1.00	2.00	100	1.00	2.00	100
	Average Percentage Increase		70%	Average Percentage Increase		70%	Average Percentage Increase		70%

The methodology for calculating the proposed fares with the increase percentages can be found at **Appendix Two**.

6. The application also proposes variations to the timings in which different Tariffs can be used, including the proposal that 'Tariff Three' is to be used every day.

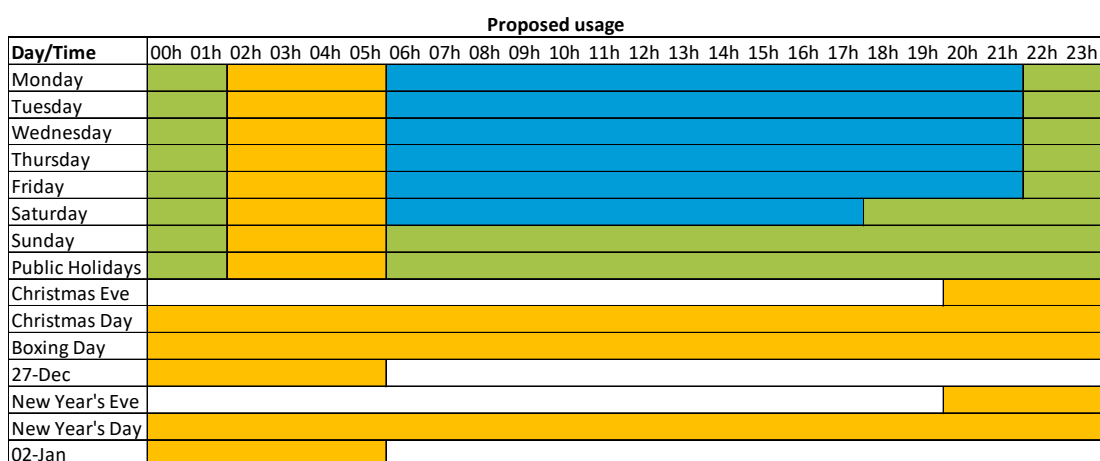
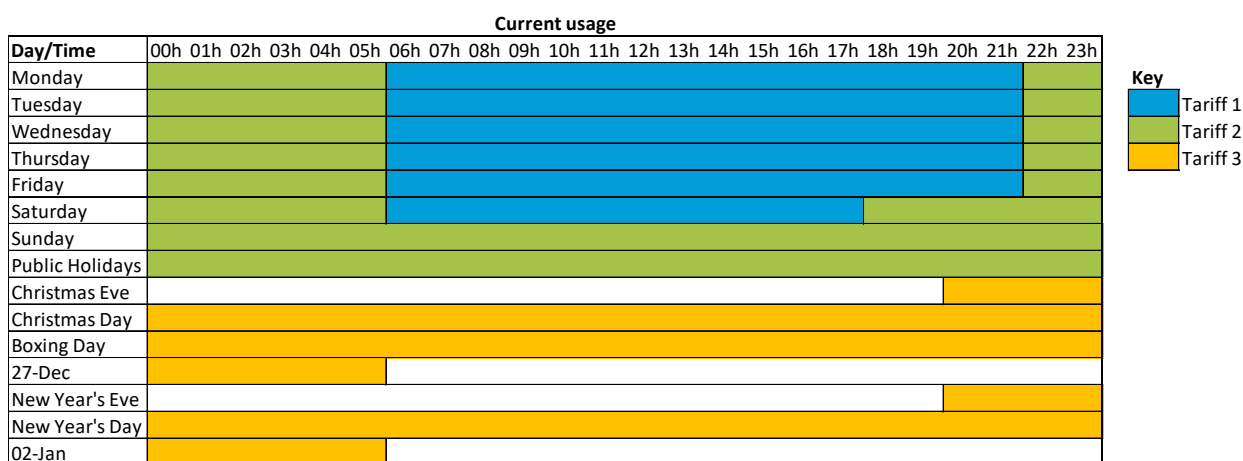
	Current Timings	Proposed timings
Tariff One	<u>Monday to Friday</u> 06:00 hours to 22:00 hours And <u>Saturday</u> 06:00 hours to 18:00 hours	<u>Monday to Friday</u> 06:00 hours to 22:00 hours And <u>Saturday</u> 06:00 hours to 18:00 hours
Tariff Two	<u>Monday to Friday</u> 22:00 hours to 06:00 hours And <u>Saturday</u> 18:00 hours to 06:00 hours And <u>Sunday</u> 00:01 hours to 00:00 hours And <u>Public Holidays</u> (excluding Tariff 3 Timings) 00:01 hours to 06:00 hours the following day	<u>Monday to Friday</u> 22:00 hours to 02:00 hours And <u>Saturday</u> 18:00 hours to 02:00 hours And <u>Sunday</u> 06:00 hours to 02:00 hours And <u>Public Holidays</u> (excluding Tariff 3 Timings) 06:00 hours to 02:00 hours
Tariff Three	<u>Christmas</u> 20:00 hours on 24 th December to 06:00 hours on 27 th December And <u>New Year</u> 20:00 hours on 31 st December to 06:00 hours 2 nd January	<u>Christmas</u> 20:00 hours on 24 th December to 06:00 hours on 27 th December And <u>New Year</u> 20:00 hours on 31 st December to 06:00 hours 2 nd January And <u>Monday to Sunday</u> 02:00 hours to 06:00 hours

Proposed Tariff Increases

- A copy of the current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares can be found at **Appendix Three** and a Table of Fares demonstrating the proposed variation can be found at **Appendix Four**.
- The Committee should note that, due to the time required to carry out a statutory public consultation, any variation, is unlikely to take effect before December 2023.

Proposed usage changes

- The usage changes proposed significantly increase the use of Tariff Three. This Tariff was previously restricted to only the Christmas and New Year periods while the proposal removes that restriction, allowing use every day of the year between 02:00 and 06:00 hours.



Comparisons with Other Authorities

- A copy of Hackney Carriage tariff charts from other Licensing Authorities can be found at **Appendix Five**.
- On average, Oxford City Councils Hackney Carriage Table of Fares ranks as 96th most expensive in the Country according to Private Hire and Taxi Monthly statistics. When compared to other districts South Oxfordshire; Vale of White Horse; Leeds

City, Wokingham Borough; Milton Keynes all ranking higher. Cherwell; West Oxfordshire; Birmingham City; Cambridge City; Luton and Sheffield City all ranking lower than Oxford City.

View of Oxford City Council Licensing

12. The licensing department agree that an increase in Tariffs is necessary to support the trade, particularly considering the supporting evidence regarding CPI and RPI provided in the application.
13. Oxford City Councils Table of Fares is not an outlier in terms of tariff costs across the country: as it ranks 96th most expensive of 317 Councils, an increase is not fundamentally unfair on customers.
14. Concerns about the inconsistent mileage charges proposed, namely charging more per mile for travelling four miles than three.
15. Regarding the approximate 15x increase of use for Tariff Three: this change will impact the night time economy and early morning commuters.

Hackney Carriage Vehicles operating between 02:00 and 06:00 hours have a crucial role to play in the safe dispersal of the night time economy. An increase in cost to the travelling public during these times may negatively impact this role, as intoxicated or vulnerable people may avoid this safe dispersal option if the cost is too high.

Consultation

16. Should the Committee approve a variation to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares, a public notice will be required in a local newspaper providing details of the proposed variation, and a period of 28 days will commence for a public consultation.

Financial implications

17. There are no financial implications to the Council.

Legal issues

18. If no objection to the proposed table of fares/ variation is made within the period specified in the newspaper notice, or if all objections are withdrawn, the table of fares/ variation will come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection or, if more than one, of the last objection, whichever date is the later.
19. If an objection is made and is not withdrawn, the Council would have to set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the table of fares, will come into force with or without modifications after consideration of the objections.
20. The requirements for a fair consultation are that: (i) the consultation takes place at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; (ii) the proposer gives sufficient information regarding the proposal to consider intelligent consideration and

response; (iii) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and (iv) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

Equality impact

21. There are no adverse impacts anticipated on anyone with protected characteristics.

Environmental implications

22. There are few environmental considerations arising directly from this report and no impact is anticipated on the environment.

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