

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH) TO
THE EXECUTIVE
ON 5 APRIL 2007

Revised Tariffs for Hackney Carriages

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The Council last reviewed the tariff structure and charges for Hackney Carriages in September 2003. This report sets out the results of a consultation exercise with Hackney Carriage drivers within this District, and asks Members to determine the tariff level which should be proposed for the next two years.
- 1.2 Following this initial decision from Members, the proposed tariff must be published in a local newspaper so that any member of the public or trade can make representations to the Council. At least 14 days must be allowed for receipt of these representations, from the date of publication. If no objections to the proposal are received, the tariff will take effect on a previously specified start date. Any objections which are received must be considered at Member level, and the tariff (with any necessary amendments) must be introduced within two months of the original start date. A flow chart setting out this process is given in Appendix 3.
- 1.3 The contact officer for this report is Rob Akers, Team Leader (Food and Safety), extension 382.

2.0 Recommendations

- (a) *that the proposal to increase the tariff for Hackney Carriages within the Council's District to the average amounts (rounded to the nearest five pence) arising from the recent consultation exercise, as given in the table below be approved:*

	Tariff One (£)				Tariff Two (£)			
	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)
Rounded average requested	3.00	3.00	0.20	0.25	4.10	4.15	0.30	0.30
Soiling charge	£50 (No change)							

- (b) *that this proposed tariff be published for consultation on 12th. April 2007, and take effect from 27th. April 2007, provided that no objections have been received.*
- (c) *that the Executive delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Licensing to consider any objections which are received and approve a final tariff, with any necessary amendments.*
- (d) *that a periodic consultation exercise with the taxi trade within the District is undertaken once every two years, to ascertain their views on tariff levels, the results of which will be reported to Members with recommendations made as to the amendment of tariff levels.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

This report supports the Council's overall aim of seeking the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the Vale, protecting and enhancing the vitality of our towns and villages. In particular this report helps to create a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier environment

4.0 Current tariff and comparisons

4.1 On the latest information available, using a two mile 'Tariff One' fare as a benchmark, the national average is £4.49, whereas the Council sets this at £5.30. This is the maximum which taxi drivers may charge, although they are at liberty to make a reduced charge if they wish.

4.2 Tariff One is a list of basic rates, whereas the rates in Tariff Two apply during unsocial hours (see the note to Appendix 1 for a complete definition). The current rates for this Council are as follows:

Tariff One (£)				Tariff Two (£)			
Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)
2.70	2.70	0.20	0.20	3.75	3.75	0.25	0.25

A charge is also specified for 'soiling', which covers cleaning and loss of income where the interior of the vehicle has been soiled by customers. This is currently £50.

4.3 Comparisons between tariffs in England are published regularly in trade press. The table below shows that this Council's rate is currently the highest in Oxfordshire (using the two mile 'tariff one' fare for comparison) although one council has not revised the local tariffs since 2001 and another does not set a tariff:

Name of Council	'Tariff One' 2 Miles	Date Introduced
Vale of White Horse D. C.	£5.30	September 03
West Oxfordshire D.C.	£4.35	March 01
Cherwell D. C.	£4.30	May 06
Oxford City Council	£4.70	February 06
South Oxfordshire D.C.	Tariff set by taxi drivers themselves	

4.4 The tariff for Private Hire Vehicles is not set by the Council. Operators of these vehicles set their own rates.

4.5 At a meeting with taxi drivers/proprietors and private hire operators on 6 December 2006, a number of changes to the tariffs for Hackney Carriages were suggested, although some expressed the view that the tariff should not be changed. A consultation process has therefore been completed, whereby each taxi driver/proprietor and operator was asked their views on how the tariff system should be changed.

5.0 Results of consultation

5.1 Ten replies were received from the taxi trade, out of a total of 285 questionnaires sent out (a response rate of only 3.5%). The details of these replies are given in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

- 5.2 Out of the ten respondents only two did not request an increase in the tariffs. The table below takes the responses from Appendix 1, showing the average figure requested by the trade for each charge, then rounding each to the nearest five pence.

	Tariff One (£)				Tariff Two (£)			
	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)
Average requested	2.98	2.99	0.22	0.23	4.08	4.13	0.30	0.29
Rounded average	3.00	3.00	0.20	0.25	4.10	4.15	0.30	0.30
Current VWH Rate	2.70	2.70	0.20	0.20	3.75	3.75	0.25	0.25

- 5.3 The comments received on the questionnaires are given in Appendix 2. These show that there is support for a more regular review of the taxi tariff.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1 Although the Council has not increased the Hackney Carriage tariff since September 2003, the maximum charge which taxis can make in this District is higher than in West Oxfordshire, Cherwell, and Oxford City (using the Tariff One 2 mile charge as a benchmark). It is also over eighty pence higher than the national average.
- 6.2 A 3.5% response rate to the consultation is less than expected, although all taxi drivers/proprietors and operators were given an opportunity to submit their views. Nevertheless, the consultation process has shown that of those who responded the majority would like an increase in the tariff. The use of a rounded average based on the respondents' individual requests is considered to be the fairest and most expedient way to arrive at an increase which reflects the consultation response.
- 6.3 If Members determine the proposed tariff at this meeting it will be published on 12th. April and will take effect from 27th. April, provided there have been no objections. If objections are received, these will need to be considered by the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Licensing, subject to such delegation being approved by the Executive. The legal requirement is that any objections must be considered within 2 months from 27th. April, but every effort will be made for these to be considered early in the week commencing 30th. April.

DAVID STEVENS
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH)

Background papers

December 2006 - Standard letter sent to Hackney Carriage drivers, explaining the consultation process.

Appendix 1

Hackney Carriage Tariff Survey – Summary of Requested Charges

Questionnaire No.	Tariff One (£)				Tariff Two (£)			
	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)	Less than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	More than $\frac{7}{10}$ Mile	Subsequent $\frac{1}{10}$'s Mile	Waiting Time (per minute)
1*	2.70	2.70	0.20	0.20	3.75	3.75	0.25	0.25
2	2.70	none given	0.25	none given	3.50	none given	0.25	none given
3	3.00	3.00	0.20	0.20	4.00	4.00	0.25	0.25
4	3.20	none given	0.25	none given	4.20	none given	0.40	none given
5	2.70	2.70	0.25	none given	3.75	3.75	0.30	none given
6	3.20	3.20	0.20	0.25	4.00	4.00	0.25	0.25
7	3.20	3.20	0.20	0.25	4.80	4.80	0.30	0.30
8	3.20	3.20	0.20	0.25	4.80	4.80	0.30	0.30
9	3.20	3.20	0.25	0.25	4.20	4.20	0.40	0.40
10*	2.70	2.70	0.20	0.20	3.75	3.75	0.25	0.25
Average	2.98	2.99	0.22	0.23	4.08	4.13	0.30	0.29
Current VWH Rate	2.70	2.70	0.20	0.20	3.75	3.75	0.25	0.25

*Status quo

N.B. Tariff One is the basic rate; Tariff Two applies: (a) on public holidays, from 10 p.m. on the evening preceding the holiday until 6 a.m. on the morning after the holiday, and (b) to all journeys on all other days commencing after midnight and before 6 a.m.

Appendix 2

Hackney Carriage Tariff Survey – Summary of Comments

Questionnaire No.	Comment
1	No change.
2	Any changes to tariff charges should be on a yearly basis rather than 2 increases in a short space of time and then nothing for years.
3	No comments.
4	No comments.
5	Base rate should remain the same but running cost should be increased from 20p to 25p rate one and 25p to 30p rate two.
6	It would be nice to get price change sorted out as it's been over 3 years.
7	Tariff two at the old rate is only 12.5%. New should be 50% extra of tariff one working bank holidays give not much incentive.
8	No comments
9	No comments
10	No change.

**FLOW CHART FOR SETTING HACKNEY CARRIAGE
FARES**

