



*City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association*  
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Founded 1952

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Mr Philip Pirouet  
Taxi Licensing Officer  
Oxford City Council  
Ramsay House  
St Ebbes Street  
Oxford  
OX1 1PT

25<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Dear Philip

We, the undersigned, collectively representative of the vast majority of both hackney carriage & private hire license holders, wish to formally object to the proposed high level of increase in license fees & charges.

Whilst we note that the level of charges have remained static since 1997, the number of licenses have increased substantially, this in turn has raised additional revenue for the City Council as calculated below...

1997

Hackney Carriage vehicles	99	X £390=	£38,610
Private Hire vehicles	110	X £330=	£36,300
Hackney Carriage drivers (est)	200	X £84 =	£16,800
Private Hire drivers (est)	200	X £64 =	£12,800

**Approx Revenue per annum 1997 £104,510**

2005

Hackney Carriage vehicles	106	X £390=	£41,340
Private Hire vehicles	314	X £330=	£103,620
Hackney Carriage drivers (est)	350	X £84 =	£29,400
Private Hire drivers (est)	350	X £64 =	£22,400

**Approx Revenue per annum 2005 £196,760**

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During 1994 the previous £12 fee charged to taxi licensing section for police record checks was dispersed by the City Council to individual badge holders, this represented an additional saving to Oxford City Council of £2,800 \* per annum from that year on, that fee has now risen to £33, a dispersal from the City to the licensee of a further £7,700 per year, in real terms increasing the departments *basic* revenue to £199,560, an increase of over 90% over 1997 figures.

During the 1980's, Colta, having involve the local ombudsman in relation to charges applied by Oxford City Council to the taxi licensing budget, the authority made it clear that the budget was 'self financing', during this proposed increase, we are advised by the taxi licensing section that a 'rationalisation of charges' now requires the licensing budget to be 'self financing' ?

We have little issue with the level of financing applied by the licensing department itself, for example the salaries for 2004/05 of £85,756, however, we object in the most strongest possible terms to salaries of *other* Oxford City Council employees from *satellite* sections spread around the authority which appears to *top up* budgets of *non self funding* sections of the authority, a sum dispersed around the authority exceeding that of those employed within taxi licensing itself, an additional £96,632.

Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, allows a local authority to 'aggregate' fees sufficient to cover (in whole or part), the *reasonable* cost of administration in connection with the control & supervision of licensed vehicles, in 1976 the Act itself considered that reasonable cost to be £25 per license, today in Oxford the hackney carriage license is 1,420% above that rate an average of 49% per annum rise.

We object to the taxi & hire car licensing budget which is derived solely from license fees, being dispersed in the manner practiced by Oxford City Council & suggest that such practice may be contrary to section 70 in so much that the 'satellite' staff funded by the charges are not a direct part of the control & supervision mechanism as set out in that section of the act.

Further to the above issues, Oxford City Council motor transport section are authorised by the taxi licensing section to carry out six monthly testing of all vehicles licensed by the authority, a charge of £54 is levied for this service 29% above the Mot fee set by the Department of Transport, we believe the MT section is shortly to increase this fee to £60, 43% above the Mot charge. Taxi licensing claim that MT justify such charges due to 'extra taxi issues' being required, experience *proves* that MT staff rarely carry out full Mot examinations let alone any extras charged to taxi licensing through license fees, taximeters, door signs, emissions, vehicle interiors, bodywork, fixing of license plates, all ignored during the majority of testing.

A breakdown of figures provided to us, shows a sum of £12,000 per annum, £3000 for each three monthly sitting of the licensing sub committee, whilst we accept the necessity of that committee & that it represents a part of the control & supervision of the taxi & hire car regime, this sum appears to reflect unrealistic value when we consider the time element of such a committee, this is particularly relevant when any charges for the authorities legal advisors for attendance at such committees, have already been charged elsewhere in the breakdown supplied.

The breakdown supplied shows a charge of approximately £9,500 in relation to the Business Unit Managers salary, we challenge the legitimacy of such a charge being levied where 'control or supervision' is duplicated outside of the licensing section itself, the fact that Oxford City Council chose to 'rationalise' their structure has little to do with direct control & supervision of the licensing regime. We therefore ask that further 'rationalisation' takes place & is reflective of legislation set out in section 70 of the 1976 Act.

Finally, hackney carriage fares are 'clinically' regulated by Oxford City Council, the rate of inflation is strictly applied to general fare increases, its inconceivable to imagine a situation where no increase in fares had been sought for a number of years & then Oxford City Council suddenly allowed an increase of the magnitude being applied due to 'rationalisation', we very much doubt any licensing regime would permit fare increases amounting to an average of 90% over a ten year period & ourselves would not be able to justify such increases merely due to the fact that we chose to 'rationalise' our own internal structure.

Yours sincerely

*Alan Wetherby*  
COLTA

*Brian Wom*  
ABC TAXIS

*M. Amir Siyaf*  
M. AMIR SIYAF  
ROYAL-CAR

*V. Masar*  
Radio Taxis, Oxford.

*Alan Wetherby*  
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CITYTAXI

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