

To: General Purposes Licensing Committee
Date: 22 September 2020
Report of: Head of 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 from the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (COLTA)
Policy Framework	Vibrant and Sustainable Economy
Recommendations: That the General Purposes Licensing Committee resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the application from the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (COLTA) for a variation to the current Hackney Carriage table of fares in accordance with the information contained within this report; and 2. Instruct the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety 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 from COLTA
Appendix 2	Effect of Proposed Variation
Appendix 3	Methodology for Calculating the Proposed Fare Variation
Appendix 4	Current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
Appendix 5	Proposed Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
Appendix 6	Hackney Carriage Table of Fares from other Licensing Authorities

Introduction and background

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. On 13th November 2019, the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (“COLTA”) submitted a formal application to request to vary (increase) the tariffs in the current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares set by the Council. A copy of the application providing the reasons for the requested variation can be found at **Appendix One**.
4. Members are also informed about the requirement to undertake a statutory public consultation whenever a variation of the table of fares is proposed. There is also a need to consider any response made in relation to the proposed variation during the consultation period.

Application for the Variation of Hackney Carriage Table of Fares

5. The effect of the proposed variation as requested by COLTA for Tariff One, Two and Three and comparing it with the current tariffs is shown at **Appendix Two**. The methodology for calculating the proposed fares is shown at **Appendix Three**.
6. Paragraph 3, section b of the application says that the request is made to *“simplify the tariff structure and remove the need to negotiate fares for journeys undertake[n] beyond the city boundary – which is the legal boundary for fare control, able to be exercised by Oxford City Council”*.
7. Members must be informed that under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 such a change is not permitted by the legislation and should not be considered.
8. Paragraph 3, section d of the application requests a variation to the start time of Tariff 2 on Saturdays. It is proposed that Tariff 2 commences at 18:00 hours from 22:00 hours. The Licensing Authority has concerns that this may penalise late evening shoppers since the shops in the Westgate centre are open until 20:00 hours. The current start time of Tariff 2 is 22:00 hours and intended to capture those enjoying the night time economy of Oxford once all of the shopping visitors have departed from the city.

Proposed Tariff Increases

9. A copy of the current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares is attached at **Appendix Four** and the proposed chart submitted by COLTA is attached at **Appendix Five**.

10. The proposed tariff increases can be evaluated by comparison with the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”) and the Retail Prices Index (“RPI”). The applicable percentage change in the CPI and RPI has been calculated from the period November 2013 (when the last increase in the tariffs was determined) to September 2019. For that period the CPI percentage was 10% and the RPI percentage was 15%.
11. The average percentage on the requested increase by COLTA is comparable to the CPI and RPI increase over the same period.
12. 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 2020.

Comparisons with Other Authorities

13. A copy of Hackney Carriage tariff charts from other Licensing Authorities can be found at **Appendix Six**. This information allows a comparison with the fares set by neighbouring authorities as well as those further afield.

Consultation

14. 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 14 days will commence for a public consultation.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications to the Council.

Legal issues

16. 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.

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.

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