

TITLE	Hackney Carriage Tariff Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Licensing and Appeals Committee on 13 August 2013
WARD	None Specific
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Paul Anstey, Joint Service Delivery Manager for Environmental Health & Licensing

<p>OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY</p>

<p>To determine the Hackney Carriage tariff for the next twelve months.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p>

<p>Members are requested to consider the outcome of the Public consultation as laid down by legislation in the local newspaper in regard to the Members resolution on 11 March 2013 on the removal of the 50% surcharge on tariffs 4 – 6 and this to be replaced with a surcharge of 50 pence per additional person where a vehicle is carrying more than four passengers, regardless of the time of day.</p>

<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p>

<p>The report sets out the outcomes of the Public consultation placed in the Wokingham Times on 10 April 2013.</p>
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Background

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to fix the rates for fares and other related charges in connection with the hire of Hackney Carriages. The Licensing & Appeals Committee agreed in March 2005 to review the taxi tariffs on an annual basis.

Consultation

The following procedures are laid down by legislation and must be followed when making changes to a table of tariff and fares:

- 1.1 A note of the proposed changes must be published in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district. The notice must specify a period of at least 14 days from the date of publication when objections can be made to the Council. (This costs in the region of £950).
- 1.2 A copy of the published notice must be made available at the Borough Council Offices for public inspection, free of charge at all reasonable times.
- 1.3 If there are no objections, or those made are withdrawn, the variation in table of fares comes into effect of the expiration of the time allowed for public consultation in the notice.

If there are any objections, and they are not withdrawn, the Council must set a date within two months of the expiry date for public consultation, and then consider the objections made before agreeing a table of tariffs and fares

The Public consultation exercise was carried out in the Wokingham Times on 10 April (Appendix I). A letter was sent to all drivers informing them of the Public Consultation in regard to the notice appearing in the Wokingham Times (Appendix II)

Responses were received from 3 individual Wokingham Borough Council drivers (Appendix III).

On the 2 May 2013 an email was sent to Councillor Patman with the three objections (Appendix IV) for the Committee's consideration.

Analysis of Issues

Wokingham Borough Council set the Hackney Carriage Tariff. Realistic rates must be set by the Council that balances the economic needs of licensees, whilst ensuring that persons using hackney carriages are not overcharged. There is also the need to ensure that hackney carriage proprietors are not priced out of the market to private hire firms, although the set tariff is the maximum that can be charged. It is open to negotiation between the passenger and driver if a lower fare is to be charged.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Not Applicable		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Not Applicable		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not Applicable		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services and priorities?)

Not applicable

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

None

List of Background Papers

Public Consultation responses
 Licensing and Appeals Committee Reports 14 January 2013 and 11 March 2013
 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
 Town & Police Clauses Act 1847

Contact Yvonne Jones	Service Licensing Service
Telephone No 01635 519 519	Email Yvonne.Jones@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 1 August 2013	Version No. One

THESE PRICES DO NOT APPLY TO TAXI'S BOOKED THROUGH A PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR.

Wokingham Borough Council Hackney Carriage Table of Fares

(Implementation date 1 August 2013)

These tariffs are a maximum and any fare reduction should be negotiated with the driver before the hiring commences

Tariff 1	For hiring between 6am and 11 pm For a journey of up to 836 yards or 190 seconds or part thereof	£3.00
Tariff 1	For each subsequent 167yds or 38 seconds or part thereof	20p
Tariff 2	For hiring between 11pm and 6am Except All day Bank and official Public Holidays (exceptions see Tariff 3) Between 6pm and 11pm on 24 and 31 December	Additional 50% on Tariff 1
Tariff 3	For hiring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 11pm on 24 and 31 December • All day 25 December • All day 26 December to 6am 27 December • All day 1 January 	Additional 100% on Tariff 1

Extra Passengers:

An additional 50p per person will be added where a vehicle is carrying more than four passengers regardless of the time of day

Extra charges:

Fouling of Vehicle Exterior	£10
Fouling of Vehicle Interior	£50

If you have a complaint or comment about a Wokingham Borough Council taxi, please call (0118 974 6353) or email: licensing@wokingham.gov.uk

A copy of this notice of a change in the fee structure can be inspected at Wokingham Borough Council Offices, Shute End, during offices hours Ref: 03/13
Taxi Licensing

If no objections are made within the period specified within this notice, or if objections are made and withdrawn then the increase in fees shall come into operation on 1 June 2013. If an objection is duly made and is not withdrawn, the Council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first date specified, on which the new fees shall come into force with or without modifications as decided by them after consideration of the objections.

Any objections to the proposal, together with the grounds on which they are made, should be sent in writing to the Licensing Service by no later than 30 April 2013

Dated : 8 April 2013

Licensing Service

Brian Leahy

West Berkshire & Wokingham

Team Leader

Environmental Health & Licensing Service

Licensing Service

Wokingham Borough Council

PO Box 155, Shute End,

RG40 1WW

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee on 11 March 2013 the committee reviewed a report advising the outcomes of the consultation with existing drivers of Hackney Carriage vehicles. This was in regard to the resolution on 14 January 2013 to remove tariff 4 – 6 and replace it with a surcharge of 50p per additional person where a vehicle is carrying more than four passengers, regardless of the time of day.

Resolved: That the Council undertake a formal consultation to include the following:

1. A note of the proposed changes to be published in at least one local newspaper circulating the district. The notice to specify a period of at least 14 days from date of publication when objections can be made to the Council.
2. A copy of the published notice to be made available at the Council offices for public inspection, free of charge at all reasonable times.
3. If there are no objections, or those made are withdrawn, the variation in the table of fares becomes effect at the expiration of the time allowed for public consultation in the notice: and
4. If there are any objections, and they are not withdrawn, then the Council to set a date within two months of the expiry date for public consultation and then consider the objections made before agreeing a table of tariffs and fares.

The public notice appeared in the Wokingham Times on 10 April 2013. If we do not receive any representation during the consultation period the changes will be implemented on 1 June 2013.

Please note that the Station is now undergoing its major development. During this period you may be required to move the rank or drop off points intermittently. Please ensure that you adhere to the changes as there will be traffic management in place. We appreciate your patience at this difficult time but we can look forward to the new station and road once this is completed.

Yvonne Jones

From: Licensing
Sent: 19 April 2013 08:51
To: Yvonne Jones
Subject: FW: Tarriff review

Elizabeth Standing
 Technical & Business Support
 West Berkshire & Wokingham Environmental Health & Licensing

Direct Dial 0118 974 6766

Borough Alert website www.wokingham.gov.uk/borough-alert

From: [redacted] [mailto:gcwokingham@gmail.com]
Sent: 18 April 2013 14:30
To: Licensing
Subject: Tarriff review

Dear Eve

I received your letter regarding tarrif change. I would like to point out some important flaws in the proposal. First of all council is very keen to change the tarriff while law commission's reviewing is still in process. But in the similar circumstances our application for saloon cars was rejected on this only reason. If you can decide upon the tariffs then we strongly demand to reconsider the saloon cars again.

The new proposals are not properly in line with other boroughs and their available fleet is completely different. It will not work on these 7/8 seaters. And customers, who are already used to pay time and half to private hire companies for mpvs in all the area for a long time, will be confused. And aggressive when too many extras will be added to the starting fare. Especially after a night out and when they are six or seven. It will not be worthwhile to take extra load at late night and put yourself in danger just for the small increment. And that is the time when you have a definite argument serious or minor, in every mpv job. And it will discourage the drivers to get any mpv job. Personally I will stop working late nights and I believe many drivers will. Which might result in the shortage of mpvs at late night. On the other hand It is being proposed from many drivers to go for random strikes over the busy time even for few hours. And this time drivers are really united on this issue. It is not sensible to punish all drivers for the sake of a handful of greedy ones.

New charges are not sufficient to afford the ever high running costs of these undesirable big busses [in the most customers wordings] the drivers have already lost the regular corporate business from big companies i.e. frequent airport customers who travel without heavy luggage and don't like to travel in these wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Every area have different needs and in Rockingham borough we mainly rely on the above mentioned customers,

So we strongly request to scrap new proposals. Take strict action against the greedy elements and reconsider saloon cars.

Kind regards

[redacted]
 [redacted]

30 April 2013

Dear Wokingham Borough Council,

During times of severe economic hardship find it despicable Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is forcing upon the taxi trade of Wokingham a demeaning 50% fare reduction, affecting 90% of the taxi trade/ fleet. The trade is sick and tired some for constantly being ignored and overlooked. Just because we have no formal representation does not mean WBC can ravage us at will. With my colleagues support, I passionately speak on behalf of the entire taxi trade. Always any reaction, response is glossed over, making us all disillusioned and frustrated. Nightmare scenario has developed whereby making ends meet is intolerable, WBC is fuelling our poverty. Forced to accept a 50% fare deduction is a scandalous crime. We were forced to abandon our cherished prized granddad taxi/ 4 seater saloon hatchback vehicles, economically friendly, cost effective and pensioner friendly to what we have at present; Uneconomical to purchase run and maintain these larger taxis, higher insurance premiums and double the road tax.

Larger taxis/ MPV's mainly are used at weekends. Late nights and weekends are a completely different ball game, different conditions. Ask any cabby within these shores how one feels picking up a few or more male punters/ revellers? Late nights everyone feels uncomfortable to say the least, the potential risk is far great. Just take a look at the 'Private hire taxi monthly' magazine littered with stories; potentially life threatening, being robbed and violent attacks order of the night. Whenever concerns are flagged up with the Police a 'Civil Matter' is always cited. Wokingham's police station is closed during these difficult hours and turbulent times. Groups are often boisterous and do behave badly, these difficult customers often hassle, cause distress. If there is no more financial incentive, reward, running the gauntlet/ risk to our health and safety, it is far more important than the proposed prize of a lollipop, i.e. 50p. Any driving job is potentially high risk and dangerous. Shift work to cater weekend/late night's plays havoc with the biological clock being anti-family and anti-social. When enjoying bank/ public holidays we have no choice but to work solely to survive, most cabbies being sole traders suffer; cash flow problems, vehicle off road and above all uncertainty.

During these times of austerity, hardship, less disposable income, household squeeze, wage freezes and cost of living rampant. Combined with the constant variables that no one has control over, fuel, excessive insurance premiums, maintenance and servicing costs are making it impossible to earn a decent living. Well done and congratulations to WBC for being the only second Licensing Authority in 13 years to reduce their tariffs, first one being Medway, (source: 'Private hire monthly' magazine issue 247, 2013, www.phtm.co.uk). Below part /passage editorial quote: 'The message is a serious one: the more complicated the fare structure the more likely there is going to be trouble in river-city especially at 3am after 17 pints and whisky chases and when the passenger can't make heads and tails of the meter and then accuses the driver of ripping him off.'

Referring to another quote from the 'Private hire monthly' magazine Committee Chairman: 'We want to hear from the public if they're happy to pay the 50% surcharge.' Fiendishly well over six years too little too late, where has the councillor been for this duration, human nature who's happy to pay more? Ironically this advice from the Councillor should've been heeded from the initial implementation when larger taxis /disabled access vehicles were introduced. This notion of Wokingham Borough Council making taxi fares affordable for most is misguided. On reflection taxi fares are affordable for those whom can afford. Taxis being a mode of transports, unlike buses and

trains they do not run to timetable or a fixed route, are at customer's convenience. Providing one can fill the taxi with their 'well-heeled chums' works out cheaper than any bus/ train journey. Taxiing in Wokingham is always available on tap, 24-7, hardly any break in service throughout the whole year. There is no timetable variation, cancellation or service suspended. Taking taxis during the day is affordable, possibly not so during the night (rate 2). If every time a taxi could be filled to its potential it would become the cheapest mode of transport but this of course is not reality, sometimes customers have to travel solo.

(League tables of national fares for Tariff 1 over 2 mile journey undertaken for 363 taxi licensing authority). Reading Borough Council's taxi fares: Tariff 1 over 2 miles, for the last few four years has consistently been at 10th place in the league of Licensing Authority fares table, out of potential 363. Reading Taxi drivers do earn a fair decent living. Customers/ clients alike do use taxis and actually they're affordable otherwise who in their right mind would spend in excess of £25,000 for the iconic London black cab. West Berkshire is well placed at 18 and doubles the figure 36th for Wokingham's position in the same league table. Interestingly Wokingham and West Berkshire share the same Licensing Authority, why then such a gulf, disparity? The stark reality reflects this biased imbalance, whereby one Licensing Authority serving two different areas. How grotesque and obscene, you have Wokingham Borough Council dictating hard pressed cabbies, languishing 36th place in the league table of fares with West Berkshire 18 places higher just 6 miles away and Reading in 10th. Beggars belief we share the same Taxi Licensing Authority and there is such disdain disparity.

Today, WBC stand accused of presiding over ill thought, ill-conceived, fundamentally flawed out of date practises/ policies, in fact slowly killing off our trade. Thus in turn forcing drivers to misbehave (overcharging), e.g. replacing all the granddad taxis with uneconomical large taxis when a mix fleet, as is the case with other Licensing Authorities would be suffice acceptable. Removing now any financial incentive reward for these larger taxis will further decimate our trade. Licensing Appeals Committee abject failure to recognise necessity compared to pleasure/ leisure is folly, whereby more necessarily travel is conducted on rate/tariff1 i.e. commuting between work. Pleasure/ leisure is mainly rate 2 due to the working conditions, i.e. the price recognises type of clientele.

Other Licensing Authorities have implemented successfully and their customers abide and have accepted larger taxis do cost more, far better than taking two separate smaller taxis. Universally understood and accepted using a larger taxi i.e. more customers, expect to pay more, quite simply the fare is split and shared. Other Licensing Authorities still apply the relevant surcharges when exceeding 4 passengers, a larger taxi.

WBC having encouraged the public consultation giving platform to project whatever personal gripes they have against previous unpleasant journeys will make interesting read. An educated calculated guess, most of complaints cited will be exclusively how larger taxis are expensive, truth been known when control- measures were removed this has exposed the taxi trade of Wokingham to chronic endemic overcharging i.e. meter abuse.

If Wokingham Borough's intention is to ruin the driver and their dependant's livelihood, we will in turn explore other avenues to recoup our loss of fares. Any loss of revenue amongst any business is to redress elsewhere, can't simply write off or forget, we will recoup our loss of earnings. For starters most other adjoining Licensing Authorities have a surcharge for luggage and booking fee, we at present don't, have either. Some even have additional surcharge for using a taxi on Sunday's.

Tariff/ Rate 2 conclude daily at 7am for Bracknell Forest Council. With respect to West Berkshire and Reading Tariff /Rate 2 commences at 10pm. Higher soiling charges are also in place, our surcharge costs barely cover valet expenses. Importantly all six neighbouring authorities bar WBC charge a nominal fee per person/head, additional fee is applied.

Plausible, certain disgruntled members of the public have been given a plinth to voice their ire, for past indiscretions. Also possible persons linked with WBC spout and skew the consultation because difficult to ascertain real comments/ suggestions.

WBC OUR VISION 'A great place to live and an even better place to do business' reads irony. WBC underpinning principals 'Believe in equality in all that we do,' looks like should read 'inequality.'

Consulting with members of the public to decide on paying lower taxi fares is a one way street. In essence asking a fare paying customer either to pay 50% or 50p is a no brainer. Any business consulting with their clients/ consumers, how much they would like to pay i.e. 50% or 50p is self-defeating i.e. pointless.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Yvonne Jones

From: Licensing
Sent: 24 April 2013 10:27
To: Yvonne Jones
Cc: Julia O'Brien (West Berks)
Subject: FW: Tariff review consultation 2013

Elizabeth Standing
Technical & Business Support
West Berkshire & Wokingham Environmental Health & Licensing

Direct Dial 0118 974 6766

Borough Alert website www.wokingham.gov.uk/borough-alert

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 April 2013 09:53
To: Licensing
Subject: RE: Tariff review consultation 2013

Name: [REDACTED]
Badge No.: [REDACTED]

I don't agree that there should be a change in tariff becoz,

Firstly I drive a big Mercedes Vito which in comparison, to a saloon car has more cost to run, e.g.

Road Tax (£480)per/a mini-bus
£200 p/a saloon car approx...

8 passenger liability Insurance is a lot higher then a 4 passenger saloon vehicle...

Running Fuel cost is much more higher for my Vito then a saloon car, which I pay....

Secondly, if it was appropriate and so affordable, 8 passengers that could sit in my car would book 2 saloon cars that would for Example charge £20 a car a journey, in my car this would be £30 which lead them to save £10.....

Also, other councils for e.g Oxfordshire, and Maidenhead allow saloon vehicle to run as Hackney, but Wokingham Borough Council wants Wheel Chair Accessible Vehicle which are costly to buy.

Therefore as mentioned throughout with the points above I don't agree there should be a changes in tariff...

Regard
Kamran Pervaiz

> Subject: Tariff review consultation 2013
> From: [REDACTED]

Yvonne Jones

From: Yvonne Jones
Sent: 02 May 2013 16:33
To: Barrie Patman
Cc: Julia O'Brien; Julia O'Brien (West Berks)
Subject: Public Notice
Attachments: FW: Public consultation, fare review; FW: Tariff review consultation 2013; FW: Tarriff review

Importance: High

Dear Mr Patman

I am attaching the responses from the Public Notice which was as requested in the paper for consultation on the 10 April with closing date of 30 April, for your consideration.

I have acknowledged receipt of the objections.

Kind regards,
Eve

Yvonne Jones
Enforcement Officer
Licensing Service
West Berkshire and Wokingham
Environmental Health and Licensing Service

Yvonne.Jones@wokingham.gov.uk

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