

Council



Listening Learning Leading

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Date: 10 July 2013

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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on

THURSDAY 18 JULY 2013 AT 6.00 PM

at

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
OFFICES**

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MARGARET REED
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Note: Please remember to sign the attendance register.

Agenda

1 Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 12)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the annual meeting held on 16 May 2013 (**attached**).

4 Chairman's announcements

5 Questions from the public and public participation

To receive any questions from members of the public and details of any requests to address council on an item on the agenda.

6 Making the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire (Pages 13 - 16)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 11 July 2013, will consider a report on making the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire.

The report of the head of planning, which Cabinet will consider on 11 July 2013, was circulated to all councillors. Please bring this report (copy attached) to the meeting.

The recommendation of Cabinet will be circulated to councillors on Friday 12 July.

7 Hackney Carriage Tariff in South Oxfordshire District Council area (Pages 17 - 66)

At its meeting on 8 July 2013 the General Licensing Committee considered a report on whether to introduce a council set taxi tariff or to allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariffs.

The report of the head of legal and democratic services, which General Licensing Committee considered on 8 July 2013, was circulated to all councillors with the committee agenda. Supplementary papers were circulated separately.

Please bring this report and additional papers (copy attached) to the meeting.

The recommendation of the General Licensing Committee is:
to allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariffs.

8 Community Governance Review - Draft Terms of Reference (Pages 67 - 76)

To consider the report of the chief executive on the draft terms of reference for a community governance review – a review of parish arrangements within the district **(attached)**.

9 Designating the council's s.151 chief financial officer (Pages 77 - 80)

To consider the report of the strategic director and chief finance officer on a proposal to designate the head of finance as the section 151 chief financial officer for South Oxfordshire District Council **(attached)**.

10 Mr Christopher Quinton - leave of absence

If a councillor fails to attend any meeting of the authority for six consecutive months, he/she becomes disqualified unless the failure was due to some reason approved by Council before the expiry of that period.

Mr Christopher Quinton is due to start a twelve week period of treatment next month followed by a recovery period.

Council is therefore asked to approve his absence from any meetings of the authority for a period exceeding six months. In granting approval, it is necessary to specify the reasons to which the approval relates and the period for which it will run.

Recommendation: to approve the non-attendance of Mr Christopher Quinton at meetings until 31 December 2013 due to his ill health, period of treatment and ongoing recovery.

MARGARET REED

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Minutes

OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

Council



Listening Learning Leading

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON THURSDAY 16 MAY 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Mrs J Carr (Chairman) – in the chair for the election of Chairman.

Ms Anna Badcock, Mr Felix Bloomfield, Mr David Bretherton, Mrs D Brown, Mrs Celia Collett, MBE, Mr Steve Connel, Mr Bernard Cooper, Mr Philip Cross, Mrs Margaret Davies, Mrs Pat Dawe, Mr Leo Docherty, Mr David Dodds, Mrs Ann Ducker, MBE, Mrs Elizabeth Gillespie, Mr Mark Gray, Mr Tony Harbour, Mrs Eleanor Hards, Mr Neville F Harris, Mr Paul Harrison, Mr Marc Hiles, Ms Elizabeth Hodgkin, Mr Malcolm Leonard, Ms Lynn Lloyd, Mrs Denise Macdonald, Mrs Ann Midwinter, Mrs Judith Nimmo-Smith, Reverend Angie Paterson, Mr Alan Rooke, Mrs Pearl Slatter, Mr David Turner, Mrs Margaret Turner, Mr Michael Welply, Mrs Jennifer Wood and Miss Rachel Wallis

Apologies:

Mr Roger Bell, Ms Joan Bland, Mr John Cotton, Ms Kristina Crabbe, Mr Marcus Harris, Mr Stephen Harrod, Dr Christopher Hood, Mr Imran Lokhon, Mr Christopher Quinton, Mr Bill Service and Mr Robert Simister tendered apologies.

Officers: David Buckle, Steve Bishop, Steven Corrigan, Kathy Fiander, Matt Prosser, Anna Robinson and Margaret Reed

Mrs Carr reviewed her year as Chairman of the council, thanked councillors for all their support and Mrs Brown, as Vice-Chairman, and Mr Hewer for their assistance during the year.

Mrs Ducker paid tribute to Mrs Carr in recognition of her work as Chairman of the council during the past year.

1 Election of chairman

Mrs D Brown was nominated as Chairman.

RESOLVED: to appoint Mrs D Brown as Chairman of the council for the ensuing year.

Mrs Carr presented Mrs Brown with the chain of office.

Mrs Brown signed her declaration of acceptance of office, presented Mrs Carr with the past Chairman's badge, Mr Brown with the escort's badge and made an acceptance speech.

Mrs Brown in the chair.

2 Appointment of vice-chairman

Mrs A Midwinter was nominated as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED: to appoint Mrs A Midwinter as Vice-Chairman of the council for the ensuing year.

The Chairman presented Mrs Midwinter with the chain of office.

Mrs Midwinter signed her declaration of acceptance of office, made an acceptance speech and presented Mr Midwinter with the escort's badge.

3 Apologies

Apologies were submitted as recorded on page one of these minutes.

The Chairman agreed, on behalf of Council, to send Mr C Quinton its best wishes owing to his illness.

4 Minutes, 25 April 2013

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2013 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them.

5 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

6 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman advised Council of her chosen charities for her year of office – The Chilterns Multiple Sclerosis Centre and The Oxford Heart Centre's Heartfelt Appeal.

7 Leader of Council report

The Leader of Council made no changes to the Cabinet membership, allocation of portfolios, the executive scheme of delegation or outside body appointments.

She thanked all Cabinet members for the work undertaken on council business and praised both officers and councillors for working as a team to meet the needs of the residents of South Oxfordshire and making the council a high achieving authority.

8 Appointments to committees, panels and joint committees for 2013/14

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the appointment of those committees which are required to be politically balanced together with the Community Investment Fund Panel and Licensing Acts Committee.

The Chairman referred to the following recommendation tabled at the meeting covering these appointments to reflect the allocation of an additional Planning Committee seat to the Conservative group, a NNDR Appeals Panel seat to the Liberal Democrat group and a Housing Appeals Panel seat to each of the Independent and Labour groups to reflect their membership on the council. The recommendation reflected the Independent group's offer of its seats on the Audit and Governance Committee and the Housing Appeals Panel and the Conservative group's offer of one of its seats on the NNDR Panel to Mr Neville Harris.

That for the 2013/14 municipal year Council:

1. appoints the committees and panels and allocates seats to each political group as set in the schedule circulated at the meeting subject to 10 seats being allocated to the Conservative Group on the Planning Committee, one seat on the NNDR Appeals Panel being allocated to the Liberal Democrat group and one seat each on the Housing Appeals Panel being allocated to the Independent and Labour groups;
2. appoints councillors and substitutes to sit on the committees and panels as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
3. appoints councillors to the Licensing Acts Committee as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
4. appoints councillors and substitutes to the Community Investment Fund Panel as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
5. appoints committee chairmen and vice-chairmen as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
6. appoints Mr N Harris to the Independent group's seat on the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and Housing Appeals Panel and one of the Conservative group's seats on the NNDR Panel;
7. appoints Dr C Hood as the council's representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Mrs E Gillespie as substitute;
8. appoints Mr B Service as the council's representative and Mr J Cotton as an observer substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel
9. authorises the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader

Prior to the vote on the above motion Mrs Ducker advised that Ms L Lloyd would fill the vacant Conservative seat on the Community Investment Fund Panel with Mrs D Brown filling one of the substitute places.

RESOLVED to:

1. appoint the following committees and panels for the 2013/14 year and to appoint the membership, substitutes and chairmen and vice-chairmen as indicated to sit on them:

Names	Planning Committee, 14 Members			
Conservative (10)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Joan Bland	Jeni Wood	Ann Midwinter	Denise Macdonald	Roger Bell
Felix Bloomfield (Chairman)				
John Cotton				
Phil Cross				
Elizabeth Gillespie (Vice-Chairman)				
Lynn Lloyd				
Alan Rooke				
Robert Simister				
Margaret Turner				
Mike Welply				
SUBSTITUTES				
Conservative (10)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (3)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)
Steve Connel	Elizabeth Hodgkin	Celia Collett	Bernard Cooper	David Bretherton
Kristina Crabbe		Mark Gray	Margaret Davies	Anne Purse
Pat Dawe		Marc Hiles	Eleanor Hards	David Turner
Leo Docherty				
Marcus Harris				
Paul Harrison				
Stephen Harrod				
Malcolm Leonard				
Imran Lokhon				
Rachel Wallis				

Names	Scrutiny Committee, 13 Members			
Conservative (9)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Joan Bland(Vice-Chairman)	Elizabeth Hodgkin	Celia Collett (Chairman)	Eleanor Hards	David Turner
Steve Connel				
John Cotton				
Kristina Crabbe				
Pat Dawe				
Will Hall				
Paul Harrison				
Alan Rooke				
Margaret Turner				
SUBSTITUTES				
Conservative (9)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (3)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)
Felix Bloomfield	Jeni Wood	Mark Gray	Bernard Cooper	Roger Bell
Phil Cross		Marc Hiles	Margaret Davies	Anne Purse
Leo Docherty		Ann Midwinter	Denise Macdonald	David Bretherton
Tony Harbour				
Marcus Harris				
Lynn Lloyd				
Rob Simister				
Rachel Wallis				
Mike Welply				

Names	Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, 8 Members		
Conservative (5)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	Non-group councillor (1)
John Cotton	Margaret Davies	David Bretherton	Neville Harris
Kristina Crabbe			
Phil Cross(Vice-Chairman)			
Paul Harrison			
Mike Welply(Chairman)			
SUBSTITUTES			
Conservative (5)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)	
Pat Dawe	Bernard Cooper	Roger Bell	
Leo Docherty	Eleanor Hards	Anne Purse	
Stephen Harrod	Denise Macdonald	David Turner	
Chris Hood			
Rob Simister			

Names	General Licensing Committee, 10 Members		
Conservative (7)	Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Joan Bland	Ann Midwinter	Bernard Cooper	Anne Purse
Pat Dawe			
Elizabeth Gillespie(Vice-Chairman)			
Malcolm Leonard(Chairman)			
Pearl Slatter			
Margaret Turner			
Mike Welply			
SUBSTITUTES			
Conservative (7)	Independent (3)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)
Will Hall	Celia Collett	Margaret Davies	Roger Bell
Tony Harbour	Mark Gray	Eleanor Hards	David Bretherton
Marcus Harris	Marc Hiles	Denise Macdonald	David Turner

Names	General Licensing Committee, 10 Members		
Stephen Harrod			
Chris Hood			
Lynn Lloyd			
Alan Rooke			

Names	Licensing Acts Committee, 10 Members		
Conservative (7)	Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)
Joan Bland	Ann Midwinter	Eleanor Hards	David Bretherton
Pat Dawe(Vice-Chairman)			
Elizabeth Gillespie			
Malcolm Leonard			
Lynn Lloyd			
Pearl Slatter			
Margaret Turner(Chairman)			

Names	NNDR Appeals Panel, 5 Members	
Conservative (2)	Liberal Democrat (1)	Non-group councillors (2)
Elizabeth Gillespie	Anne Purse	Neville Harris
Malcolm Leonard		Christopher Quinton
SUBSTITUTES		
Conservative (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)	
Tony Harbour	Roger Bell	
Paul Harrison	David Bretherton	
Mike Welply	David Turner	

Names	Housing Appeals Panel, 5 Members	
Conservative (3)	Labour (1)	Non-group councillor (1)
Pat Dawe	Bernard Cooper	Neville Harris
Lynn Lloyd		
Alan Rooke		
SUBSTITUTES		
Conservative (3)	Labour (3)	
Phil Cross	Margaret Davies	
Marcus Harris	Eleanor Hards	
Pearl Slatter	Denise Macdonald	

Names		Community Investment Fund Panel, 12 Members			
Conservative (8)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	
Joan Bland	Jeni Wood	Mark Gray	Eleanor Hards	Roger Bell	
Elizabeth Gillespie					
Will Hall(Chairman)					
Malcolm Leonard					
Lynn Lloyd					
Alan Rooke					
Pearl Slatter					
Rachel Wallis					
Conservative (8)	Henley Residents (1)	Independent (3)	Labour (3)	Liberal Democrat (3)	
Dorothy Brown	Elizabeth Hodgkin	Celia Collett	Bernard Cooper	David Bretherton	
		Marc Hiles	Margaret Davies	Anne Purse	
		Ann Midwinter	Denise Macdonald	David Turner	

2. appoint Mr N Harris to the Independent group's seat on the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and Housing Appeals Panel and one of the Conservative group's seats on the NNDR Panel;
3. appoint Dr C Hood as the council's representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Mrs E Gillespie as substitute;
4. appoint Mr B Service as the council's representative and Mr J Cotton as an observer substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel
5. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

Chairman

Date

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Planning

Author: Beryl Guiver

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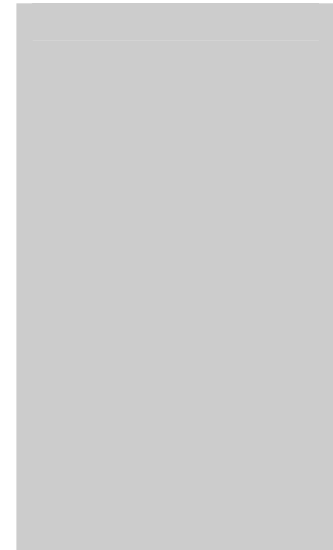
Cabinet member responsible: Rev'd A Paterson

Tel: 01491 614033

E-mail: angie.paterson@btinternet.com

To: CABINET

DATE: 11 July 2012



Making the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire

Recommendation to Council

That Cabinet recommend Council to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire

Purpose of Report

1. To consider whether the Thame Neighbourhood Plan should be made part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire following the positive outcome of the referendum held on 2 May 2013.

Corporate Objectives

2. Meeting housing need: the neighbourhood plan confirms our housing growth ambition to 2027 set out in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and allocates sites for 775 homes.
3. Building the local economy: the neighbourhood plan supports economic growth at Thame.

4. Support for communities: The neighbourhood plan has been prepared by the local community in Thame with support from this Council.

Background

5. Thame Town Council was identified as the qualifying body and the parish of Thame was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in April 2012, under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), which came into force on 6 April 2012.
6. Thame Town Council developed a neighbourhood plan with its local community and submitted it to the district council. The submitted version of the plan was publicised and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders. The consultation period closed on 24 January 2013.
7. The district council appointed independent Examiner Nigel McGurk, to review whether the plan met the basic conditions required by legislation and whether the plan should proceed to referendum.
8. The Examiner concluded that, subject to the modifications proposed in his report, the plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, is compatible with EU obligations and the Convention rights and complies with relevant provision made by or under Section 38A and B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and should proceed to a Referendum.
9. A referendum was held on 2 May 2013, where 76.47 per cent of those who voted were in favour of the plan.
10. Paragraph 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the district council must make the neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area. The district council is not subject to this duty if (and only if) the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

Options

11. The neighbourhood plan, including its preparation, does not breach, and would not otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Therefore the only available option open to the Council is to make the plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire.

Financial Implications

12. There are no significant financial implications with this decision that cannot be accommodated within budget.

Legal Implications

13. The decision to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan is a legal requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The only circumstance where the district council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). There is a requirement that the district council will publish a formal decision statement as required under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Risks

14. In view of the considerations referred to elsewhere in this report, a decision not to make the Plan would place the Council at risk of a legal challenge.

Conclusion

15. The independent Examiner found that, subject to the modifications proposed in his report, the plan meets the basic conditions and other requirements prescribed by the relevant legislation.
16. The referendum held on the 2 May 2012 met the requirements of The Localism Act 2011 and The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. Greater than 50 per cent of those who voted were in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area.
17. Accordingly it is recommended that the Thame Neighbourhood Plan is made part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire.
18. The district council will publish a formal decision statement as required under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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General Licensing Committee Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Author: Robert Draper

Telephone: 01491 823426

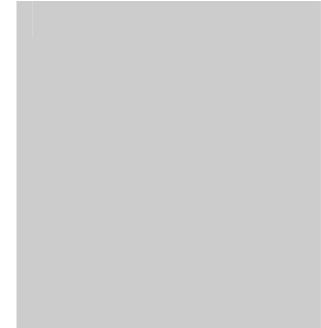
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Wards affected: All

To: General Licensing Committee

DATE: 8 July 2013



Hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire District Council area

Recommendation:

The committee is asked to consider the consultation responses set out in Appendix one and recommend Council whether to:

- a. allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariffs; or
- b. introduce a council set tariff and undertake a statutory consultation with the trade on structuring and setting the tariff.

Purpose of Report

1. To present the General Licensing Committee with a report to consider the results of the public consultation in order to decide whether the hackney carriage tariff should be set by individual operators or by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Strategic Objectives

2. Following the decision to implement the revised joint taxi licensing policy Council took the decision to undertake a further public consultation on the issue of the hackney carriage tariff to determine if it should continue to be set by individual operators and drivers or whether a council set tariff should be consulted upon and introduced.

Background

3. Following a standard procurement exercise through corporate strategy Insight Oxford were appointed as an independent and experienced company to undertake the consultation, analyse the data and produce a report. A joint working party of the councils' licensing, consultations, and communications teams worked with the consultants to produce the questionnaires and agree the methodology. The questionnaires were checked and approved by portfolio holders and chairmen of the general licensing committees from both councils. The questionnaires were designed to balance ease of completion against clarity and information on a very complex topic. There were separate provider surveys for South and Vale as the trades are statutorily separate and the questions posed were different. All drivers were individually written to twice and local trade associations were supported in encouraging their members to respond to the consultation. The public consultation was combined as hackney carriage users frequently travel from one district to the other and back again. The questionnaires were designed to be completed online either on a computer or a smartphone. The questionnaire was also available through the councils' consultation portal and paper copies were supplied upon request. The consultation lasted six weeks and ran from 15 April 2013 to 28 May 2013.
4. The consultants report is appendix one to this report. It includes all the questionnaires and associated documents.

Financial Implications

5. The taxi licensing budget is a cost recovery budget. The council is required to set fees at such a level as to recover its costs only. Some aspects of the costs of taxi licensing are excluded from this cost recovery so there will always be some cost borne by the council.
6. If Council decides to set a council set tariff and undertake a statutory consultation with the trade to structure and set a tariff this will entail additional work. A tariff could be in place for 1 April 2014 and this work can be undertaken within current resources

Legal Implications

7. The joint policy adopted in January 2013 was written to reflect current legislative requirements. All applications for licences under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Town Police Clauses Act 1847 have to be made and determined in accordance with the councils' taxi licensing policy.

Risks

8. Failure to reflect the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Town Police Clauses Act 1847 in the policy for hackney carriage and private hire could result in the council not complying with the legislation. Having a clear policy on the issue of hackney carriage tariffs helps to ensure compliance with the legislation.
9. The taxi trade services the population of the districts and beyond, taxi providers are also culturally diverse. The project team sought and took advice from the

equalities officer to ensure that consideration was given to facilitating access to the consultation for all interested parties. While all reasonable steps were taken to promote responses to the consultation there were significant variations in response rates.

Conclusion

10. The committee is recommended to consider the consultation responses set out in Appendix One and recommend Council whether to:
 - a. allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariffs; or
 - b. introduce a council set tariff and undertake a statutory consultation with the trade on structuring and setting the tariff.

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1

HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF CONSULTATION South Oxfordshire District Council

Research Report
JUNE 2013

PREPARED BY INSIGHT OXFORD (CONSULTING) LTD



CONTENTS

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Public Consultation Questionnaire
- Appendix B: South Providers' Consultation Questionnaire
- Appendix C: Email to South Oxfordshire Citizens' Panel
- Appendix D: Taxi Operator's Email to Customers
- Appendix E: South Oxfordshire District Council's Taxi Forum Invitation

1. BACKGROUND

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils (SODC and VWHDC) identified, through a stakeholder consultation on their overall taxi policy in 2012, that research was needed to understand specific factors relating to hackney carriage tariffs. The original consultation showed there to be divergent views relating to the following:

- The potential introduction of a council set hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire. Currently individual drivers and companies set their own tariffs.
- Whether to retain or remove the council set hackney carriage tariff that is already in place in The Vale and, if retained, whether it should be restructured.

To help inform their decision-making, SODC and VWHDC commissioned Insight Oxford to conduct independent research among members of the public and providers of taxi services. This report focuses on aspects of the consultation relation to South Oxfordshire and summarises the research objectives, methodology, key findings and conclusions. A separate report has been produced that focuses on issues relating to the Vale.

The following abbreviations have been used throughout this report:

Hackney carriage vehicle	HCV
Private hire vehicle	PHV
South Oxfordshire District Council	SODC
Vale of White Horse District Council	VWHDC

2. CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this consultation were to:

- Obtain a quantified snapshot of the extent to which relevant stakeholders (including users, potential users and providers of taxi services) support or oppose the introduction of a council set hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire.
- Gain an understanding of the views and concerns of the relevant stakeholders about the potential introduction of a council set hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire.

3. METHODOLOGY

The consultation on the potential introduction of a hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire was run at the same time as a very similar consultation in the Vale of White Horse. Overall this consultation included:

- A single public survey for users and potential users of HCVs including questions for South and Vale (referred to as the “public consultation” in this report).
- Two separate surveys for taxi providers in South Oxfordshire and the Vale (the former is referred to as the “South providers’ consultation” in this report).

Fieldwork ran for 6 weeks from 15/04/13 to 28/05/13. The survey questionnaires can be found in Appendices A and B.

The questionnaires for each survey were designed by Insight Oxford in partnership with the Council to ensure that appropriate questions and language were used. It was recognised that the subject matter from the public's perspective was complex. In particular, the need to distinguish between different types of taxis and understand the definition and relevance of tariffs in this context was a challenge. To help respondents distinguish between HCVs and PHVs the following definition of "hackney carriage vehicles" was provided:

"Taxis hailed from the street or taken from a taxi rank or pre-booked, they are usually found at a railway station, bus station or in town centres. They may be 'London' taxis or look like ordinary cars with a box or light on their roof showing the company name and the vehicle number"

The following information was also provided at the beginning of the survey:

*"This research **does not** relate to private hire vehicles (ordinary cars or minibuses with no roof box that can only do pre-booked journeys for pre-agreed fares)"*

An example of an existing tariff was provided (see Appendix A). Emphasis was placed on ensuring that the wording and explanations provided were as neutral and unbiased as possible.

Who was consulted?

Public consultation: The research population was defined as users and potential users of HCVs in South Oxfordshire. They did not, necessarily, need to be resident in South Oxfordshire as they could be working in or visiting the area from a neighbouring county or further afield. For this reason it was not possible to determine the size of the research population but a 'best estimate' approach was used drawing on population figures for South Oxfordshire and results from the National Travel Survey.

South Oxfordshire has a population of approximately 108,232 (Census 2011). As such it was calculated that achieving a total response rate of 383 would provide a good level of statistical robustness (95% confidence level and +/-5% confidence interval), while accepting that some respondents would live outside the district.

Results of the National Travel Survey (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown>) suggest that HCT usage is skewed toward those aged under 30. For this reason it was deemed important to target people in this age range as well as gathering views from other age groups.

South Providers' consultation: The target population was defined as all operators and drivers who provide taxi services in South Oxfordshire – of which there were a total of 808 at the time of the research.

How were they consulted?

Public consultation: Invitations to take part were sent out electronically and the consultation was widely advertised using posters and cards:

- The Council's communications team posted on Twitter and on the home page of the Council's website. They also displayed posters in public building including council offices and libraries. Small cards providing the link and a QR code to the survey were handed out by the on-street interviewers.
- An email was also sent to all 346 members of the Council's South Oxfordshire Citizens Panel.

During the course of the consultation the Council were informed that one of the larger taxi operators in the district had issued an email invitation to their customers encouraging them to take part in the survey – see Appendix D. It is not known how many people received the email nor if invitations to take part were issued by any other operators or organisations. However it is likely that this will have contributed to a substantial increase in the response rate around mid-May.

Data was captured on-line directly from respondents and via four sessions of on-street interviewing on both the South (Didcot and Henley) and the Vale (Wantage and Abingdon). A small number requested paper copies that were returned by post.

South Providers' consultation: Almost all the data was captured on-line directly from respondents. A small number requested paper copies that were returned by post and manually data entered.

Invitations to take part:

- SODC issued two postal mail shots during the consultation period informing all registered drivers and operators about the survey and encouraging them to take part (See Appendix E)
- SODC hold regular 'Taxi Forums' with drivers and operators at the district council offices. One such forum was held on 23/04/13 which provided the opportunity to ask questions about the consultation and to encourage everyone to take part. A representative from Insight Oxford attended.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

User, potential user and provider representation

- Results of the public consultation suggest that active users of HCVs in South Oxfordshire were well represented in this research (56%). However it is apparent that some of these 'users' actually used pre-booked taxis/executive cars and so it questionable whether these were HCVs.
- Some answered the survey on behalf their employer in that they were responsible for booking executive cars for local businesses. *This suggests that the sub-group of respondents identified as users of HCVs in South Oxfordshire is a 'mixed bag' of users of different types of taxis.

Use of HCVs and/or other types of taxi

- Frequency of use of HCVs in South Oxfordshire ranges from several times a week to once or twice a year (Graph 2, pg.8).
- By far the most popular use is going out for leisure (70%) while others use them for shopping, visiting friends and family, travel to and from work, medical appointments and onward journeys from train and bus trips. (Graph 3, pg.8).
- Business travel is also prominent but, in general, this tends to involve pre-booked executive cars that are not necessarily functioning as HCVs.
- There appears to be confusion, from the public's perspective, about the relevance of a hackney carriage tariff to different types of journey (hail, rank and pre-booked) and different types of vehicle (taxis/executive cars).

Views on who should set hackney carriage tariff

- There are divergent views about how hackney carriage tariffs are set, from users, potential users and providers of taxi services in South Oxfordshire
- The majority of users of HCV in South Oxfordshire, 63% (see caveat above *), would prefer an operator set tariff (Graph 4, pg.10) seeing this as important to ensure customer choice in relation to the quality, type of service and price they prefer. This was also felt to be important for maintaining and promoting competition and giving taxi operators the freedom to manage their own business without perceived interference of the council.
- The majority of non-users (55%) have a preference for a council set tariff (Graph 4, pg.10) and see this as necessary to ensuring consistency, control and fairness. Some also believe this will keep prices realistic and make taxis accessible to a wide range of the community.
- Comments demonstrated that there is some appetite to reach a 'happy medium' where a council set tariff operates for local journeys, made via hail and rank, while an operator set tariff is retained for pre-booked and longer journeys such as airport transfers.
- According to the consultation, the majority (62%) of providers of taxi services in South Oxfordshire would prefer to maintain operator set tariffs (Graph 6, pg.13)
- Of the 89 (out of 808) providers who responded to the South providers' consultation, almost 40% worked for a single taxi firm. This should be born in mind when considering these results.

Research limitations

Some responses to the public consultation, captured in the last two weeks of the fieldwork period could have been influenced by a request from one taxi operator, to their customers, to complete the survey in favour of an operator set tariff (see Appendix D). It is not known how many responses this could have generated but the sharp reversal in the data trends, away from a council set tariff and towards an operator set tariff, at this time may be explained by this.

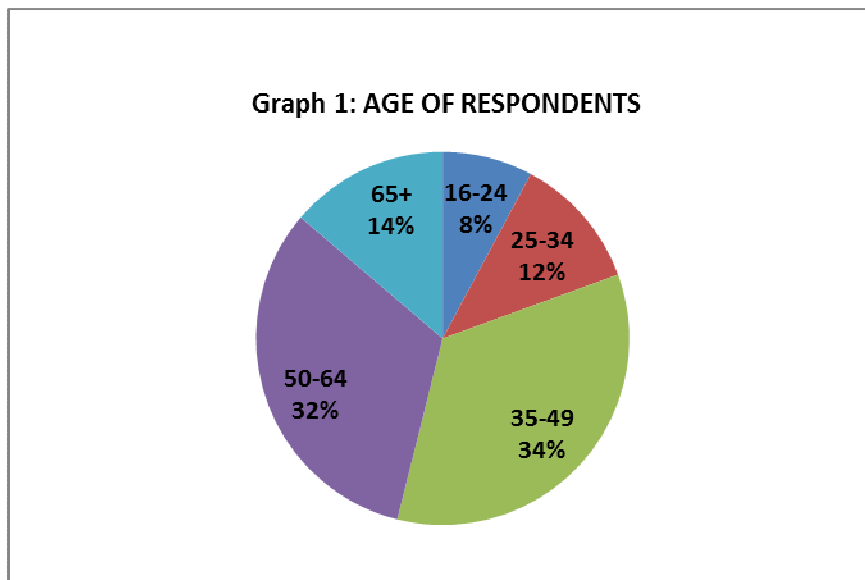
5. DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents - Public Consultation

A total of 792 responses were received for the public consultation survey with a relatively even gender split – 53% male, 47% female.

10% of respondents said that they had a 'health problem or disability that had lasted or was expected to last 12 months or more' which is broadly in line with the population of Oxfordshire.

The age range of respondents was broad, with the largest proportion, 46%, sitting in the 35 to 64 bracket.



Users and non-users of HCVs

Respondents were asked “Do you, or are you ever likely to, use hackney carriages in the South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse district areas?” (see questionnaire in Appendix A).

The table below shows results for all respondents to the public consultation survey. Just over a third said they used HCVs just in South Oxfordshire with fewer, 17% saying they just used them in the Vale. A further 30% used HCVs in both districts.

Public consultation: Location of use of HCVs	% of all respondents to public consultation (base size: 792)
Use HCVs in South Oxfordshire only	35% (275)
Use HCVs in the Vale only	17% (136)
Use HCVs in both districts	30% (240)
Don't use/unlikely to use HCVs	18% (141)

Of the 18% who said they did not, and were unlikely, to use HCVs 92 explained why - 33% said they used their own car, 17% said they always pre-booked with a firm - a number of these mentioned a specific taxi operator- and 15% said they were too expensive. A further 13% said they use the bus and others said they walked, got a lift or cycled. Some said they used more than one other form of transport. The following are examples of some of the comments provided:

“Our company uses [named taxi operator] and taxis are pre-booked”

“I am a car driver and live in a village. Taxis therefore aren't easily available for short journeys; they only seem to be interested in airport trips etc.”

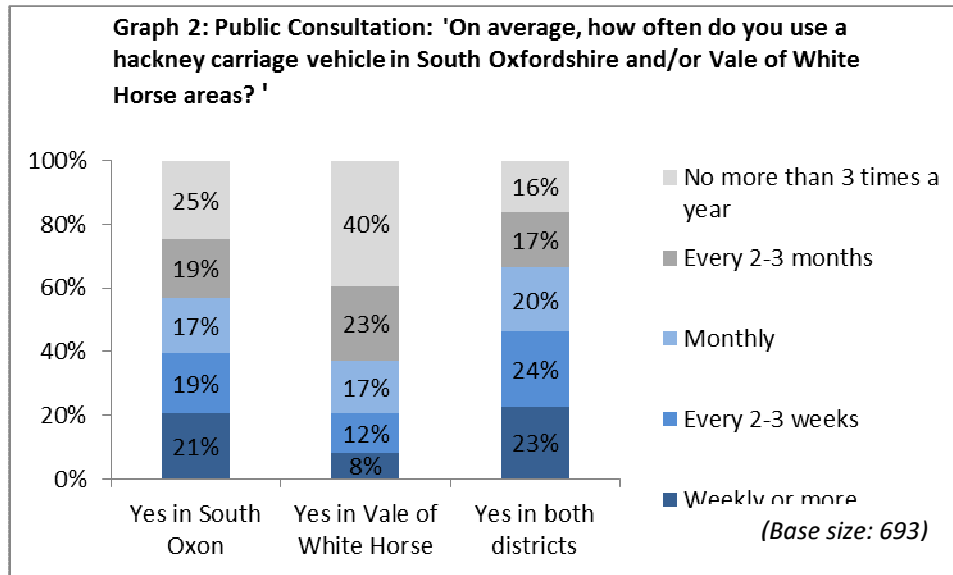
“Have a car and a bus pass”

“Suspect fares are overpriced”

“Own car is generally more convenient and cheaper”

Frequency of HCV use

When respondents were asked how often they used HCVs in South Oxfordshire and/or the Vale, answers varied widely from once a week or more to less than once a year. Graph 2 shows where, geographically, people said they used HCVs plotted against frequency of use:



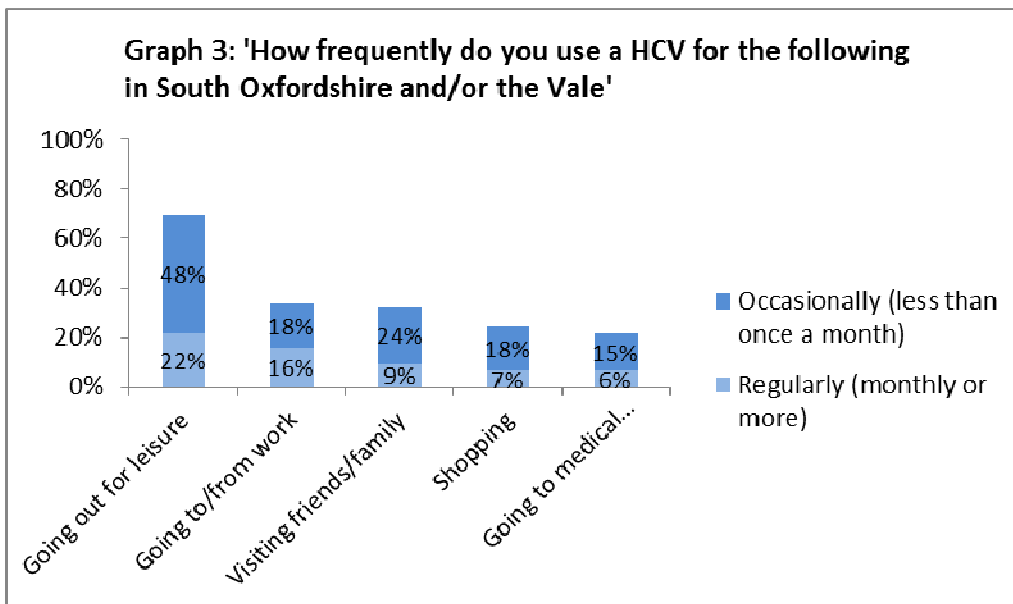
There appears to be a relatively even spread across the different frequencies of use for those who said they use HCVs exclusively in South Oxfordshire and those using them in both districts. There appear to be more frequent users in South Oxfordshire than in the Vale.

Purpose of HCV use

Respondents were asked how often, on average, they used HCVs for various purposes including getting to/from work, visiting friends or relatives, when out for leisure, shopping and going to medical appointments. They were also given the opportunity to provide any other purposes for which they used HCVs.

Overall, going out for leisure was by far the most common purpose for using a HCV with 70% of all respondents saying they used them regularly, i.e. monthly or more, or occasionally, i.e. less than once a month for this purpose.

Graph 3 provides a full summary of responses to this question:



The declared 'other' uses of HCVs were mixed and potentially indicated some confusion about vehicle types. Some mentioned uses more usual for HCVs (typically hailed or caught from a rank) such as travel from a train station or from an airport. Others mentioned uses that one might not necessarily associate with a HCV but would relate more to a pre-booked car or executive car journey such as business/corporate travel and travelling to an airport.

Main "Other" declared uses for HCVs	% of those declaring 'other' use (base size: 137)
Travel to/ from airport or port	47% (64)
Business/corporate travel	36% (49)
Travel to/ from train or bus station	26% (35)

Examples of some of the answers were as follows:

"I book taxis on behalf of my company travelling back and forth to the airports and ports"

"I organise taxis for business trips"

"I book taxis on behalf of my company travelling back and forth to the airports and ports"

"Company bookings for visitors to business in Abingdon"

"I do not book them for my use but in a professional capacity for business trips"

"Trips to stations (bus/train) for work/non-work typically"

"To and from Heathrow airport and to and from Didcot Station"

"Frequent use to go to the London Airports"

Profile of Respondents - South Providers' Consultation

93 responses were received. This represents a 12% response rate from a total of 808 licensed providers in South Oxfordshire. All respondents confirmed that they were a driver or taxi operator

licensed by SODC. This information was verified by them providing a valid ‘badge number’, their name and the firm that they worked for.

34% (31) of respondents said they owned or part-owned a taxi firm that provides hackney carriage services. 22% (20) confirmed that they were licensed private hire operators. 3% (3) said they were a representative of a trade association.

When asked ‘What firm do you currently drive for?’ 32 individual firms were mentioned with the majority represented by 1 or 2 respondents. There were 4 firms that were exceptions to this being represented by more than 2 respondents:

Firm (all with more than 2 responses)	% total respondents (base size: 93)
Firm A	39% (36)
Firm B	9% (8)
Firm C	7% (6)
Firm D	3% (3)

4 respondents declared themselves “self-employed” or “owner-driver”.

Views on who should set hackney carriage tariffs - Public Consultation

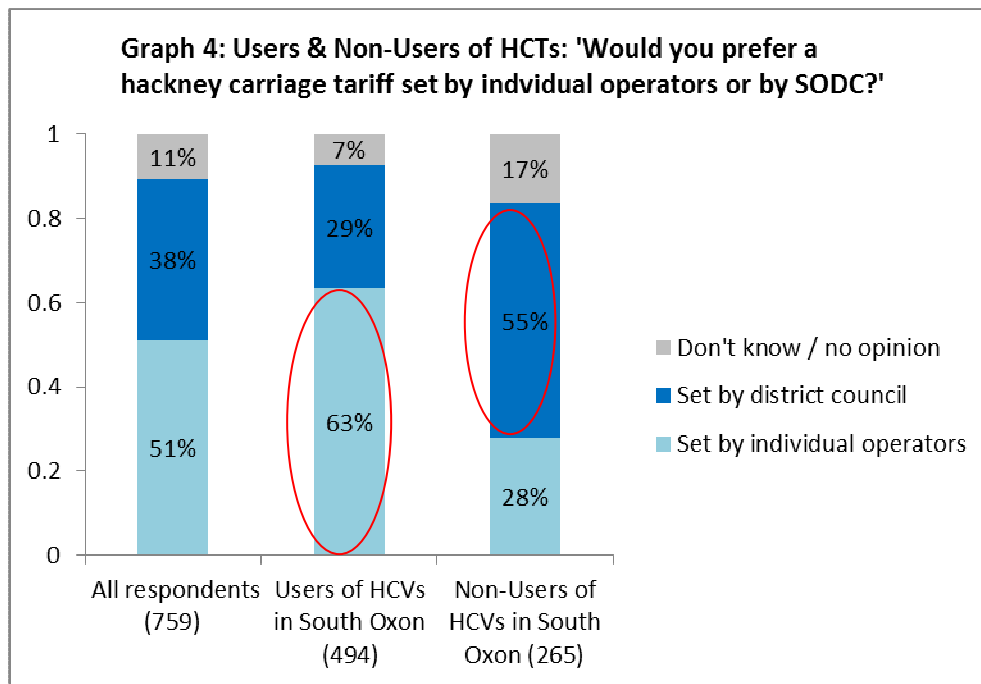
Respondents were asked ‘Would you prefer a hackney carriage tariff set by individual operators or by SODC?’ Answer options were as follows:

- Set by individual operators
- Set by district council
- Don’t know / no opinion

The responses were analysed to provide a comparison of the following:

- All respondents –users and non-users of HCVs in South Oxfordshire
- Users of HCVs in South Oxfordshire
- Non-users of HCVs

The results are summarised in Graph 4 below. This shows that just over half of all respondents had a preference for the tariff being set by individual operators. Looking at the results split into users and non-users, it is clear that the majority (63%) of those who said they use HCVs in South Oxfordshire had a preference towards an operator set tariff. Conversely, the majority (55%) of non-users had a preference for a council set tariff.



Respondents were also invited to provide a comment to explain their answer. These reflected a number of key themes.

Those in support of an operator set tariff:

A number of respondents perceived that an operator set tariff would help to support healthy competition:

“Ensures quality and service are key drivers of competition, rather than having solely price as the key competition driver”

“A fixed tariff does not encourage providers to be competitive. It leads to monopoly and complacency. In South Oxfordshire there are two large companies - [named taxi operators] - who are constantly kept on their toes by competition.”

Others saw the introduction of a council set hackney carriage tariff resulting in companies that provide higher end taxi services, needing to reduce the quality of their vehicles and services:

“The company I work for chooses to pay a higher price for a better quality of service and our provider would not be able to provide the superior service we demand if they were forced to adhere to set tariffs.”

A number of respondents underlined the importance of having the option of using an operator that provided a higher-end service at an appropriate price and saw their choice being taken away by the introduction of a council set tariff:

“I like having the opportunity to pay a higher fare for executive business travel when arranging transport for clients. Those companies in this market segment earn their reputation based on high quality service, luxury cars and professionalism. But it comes at a price. If you were to cap their prices- you would be capping the success and quality of taxi services we currently have available in South Oxfordshire.”

“When I use a taxi service I like to treat myself and my potential customers to an executive service. I strongly believe that having a fixed tariff will have a drastic effect on the quality of vehicles and possible drivers that I wish to use.”

Some of those who supported the idea of an operator set tariff did suggest the need for some caveats to help provide some guidance and/or control for example:

"... however there should be a maximum allowable charge set by the district council."

Those in support of a council-set tariff:

The main themes that emerged for those supporting a council-set tariff were the need for consistency and transparency:

"Some taxi firms in South Oxfordshire (Particularly [named taxi operator]) charge excessive tariffs, and the same journey can cost different amounts each time you travel."

"I use taxis twice a day and find that two taxi companies charge a difference of £20 for the same journey ... I am forced to use a smaller company that is less reliable as they are so much cheaper. I think if the tariffs were more guided by the council then the less reliable companies would have to up their game to stay in business."

"Didcot taxis are a rip-off when compared to Oxford and even London. I feel there is no moderation towards sensible pricing in the Didcot area. The council should work with the taxi companies in the first instance and then regulate if no way forward can be found."

Others were concerned about prices being influenced too heavily by the desire to maximise profits rather than keep them affordable for different groups of the community:

"If left in the hands of the operator, profit and greed would come before what's fair and appropriate to charge for using a service licensed by the council."

"There should be guidelines in place to protect users, particularly vulnerable users or those who rely on taxis for mobility (e.g. blind or partially sighted people)."

"Surely it would be ridiculous if the individual operators set the tariff - prices would spiral out of control."

Distinguishing between hackney carriage vehicles and pre-booked/executive cars

Comments from a number of respondents, with a mix of preferences regarding who sets tariffs, indicated that they wanted a 'middle ground' with a distinction made between hackney carriage vehicles and executive cars. Also, between how prices are set for short, local trips via hail and rank and longer trips (e.g. to airports) via pre-booked cars.

"For pre-booked taxis I think the tariff should be set by the operator (as there is the chance to discuss/negotiate a price beforehand). For roadside hailed taxis the council should set the maximum tariff" (Supported Council set tariff)

"My opinion is mixed: If you are dealing with local fares or pick up a taxi from a rank then it is good to know the fares are capped. This surely can't apply for long-distance hire which is usually pre-booked (e.g. Heathrow) and therefore outside of district council jurisdiction." (Supported operator set tariff)

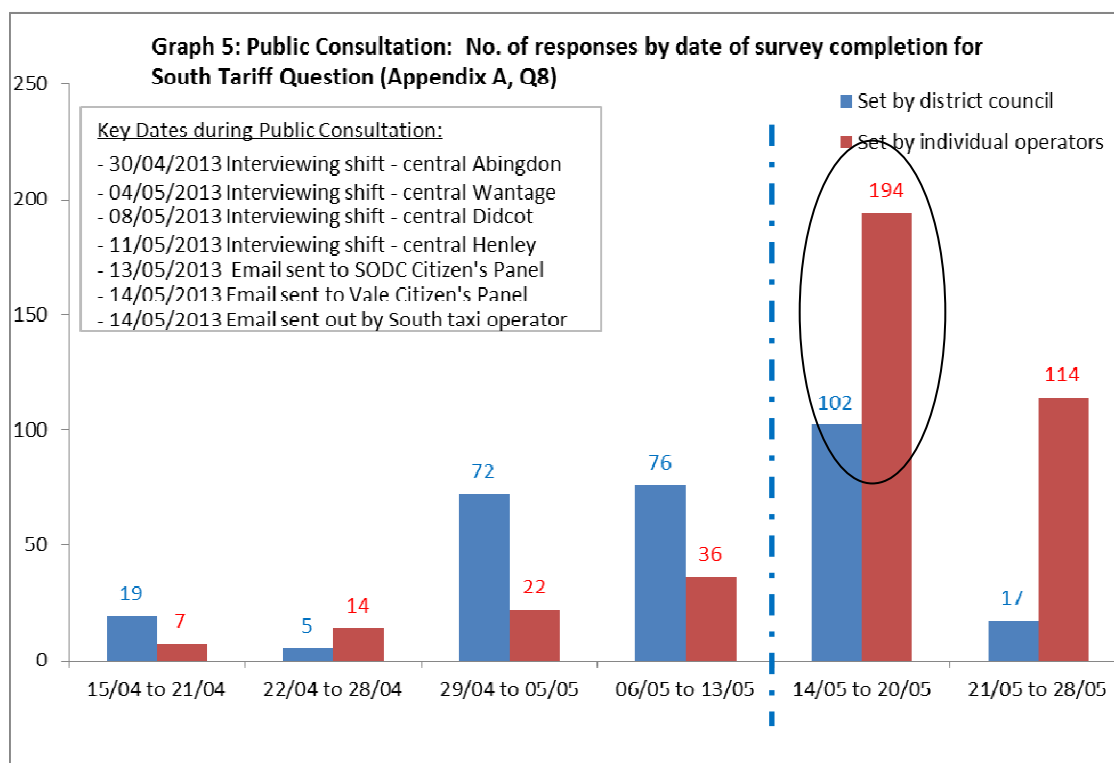
"It is a shame that both are not an option. For certain journeys a certain type of luxury and minimum standard is required. Whereas a local journey of say less than 5 miles, this is less

important. The passenger is less likely to require a Mercedes to travel from pub to home. Suggest that [named taxi operator] should run a 'Local service', where the tariffs are set by the Council and an 'Executive service' - where the existing business model, tariff set by competing companies, is maintained. This ensures quality and type of service can be chosen by the customer and not by a tariff driving down the incentive of the company to provide an executive style of service" (Supported operator set tariff)

"I agree that a maximum tariff should be set by the district council for instances where service is provided through hailing on the street or the taxi rank. In these instances the public are not able to choose provider due to immediate availability or through the process of queuing. In the instance a member of the public chooses to pre-book a service, here the individual operator may use decide to differentiate their offer, e.g. better cars, better of service. Under these circumstances, where the public are informed on their choice, the operator should have the ability to set their own tariff, thus making a competitive market place." (Supported operator set tariff)

Dates of responses and associated trends

Graph 5 below shows the number of respondents expressing a preference for a council set tariff (blue) compared with those preferring an operator set tariff (red) for 7 day intervals across the fieldwork period.



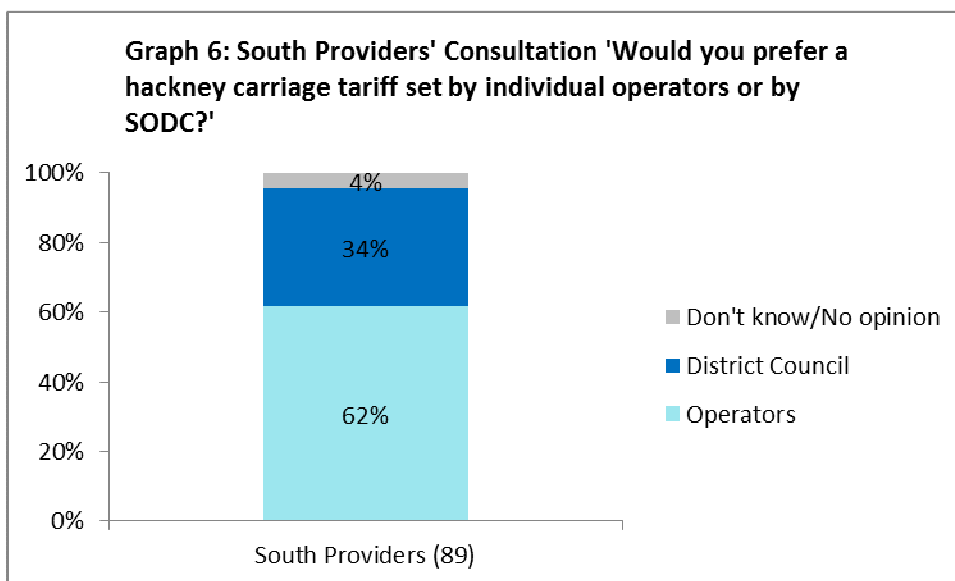
It is evident from Graph 5 that a notable change in the proportion of answers for each option after 13/05. From 15/04 to 13/05 more respondents expressed a preference for a council set tariff. From 14/05 onwards this trend sharply reversed with proportionally more respondents expressing a preference for an operator set tariff.

The key dates provided, in Graph 5 show that an email was sent out by an individual taxi operator on 14/05 (Appendix D) - the same day the response trends reversed. It should be noted that an email

was also issued on 13/05, as part of the planned consultation activity, to the SODC’s Citizen’s Panel (Appendix C). It is suggested that the email sent out by the individual operator is more likely to have prompted the boost in support for an operator-set tariff, given that it clearly asked recipients to express this preference while the Citizen’s Panel email did not.

Views on who should set hackney carriage tariffs - South Providers’ Consultation

As in the Public Consultation, the South Providers’ Consultation asked respondents “Would you prefer a hackney carriage tariff set by individual operators or by South Oxfordshire District Council? (see Appendix B). Of the 89 respondents who answered a notable majority - 62% (55) - had a preference for the tariff being set by individual operators. 34% (30) were in favour of a tariff set by the district council. 5% (4) answered ‘don’t know / no opinion’. These results are summarised in Graph 6 below.



Again, respondents were invited to provide a comment to help explain their answer.

In support of a council set tariff

Most mentioned the value of having consistency of pricing and/or ensuring fairness for the customer:

“I think it’s best if the council decides on the tariff as it would be better for the public to have a uniform tariff to avoid dispute.”

“I think the council should decide the tariff as this will eliminate any arguments among the drivers and customers.”

Some linked the subject of tariffs to that of whether there should be meters in taxis:

“I don't think there should a meter. But if the meter is going to be used then the council should set the tariff because I believe the tariff rate should be fixed for every one as this will eliminate confusion for the customer.”

In support of an operator set tariff

Some providers were concerned that a council set tariff would have a negative impact on their profitability:

“Historically any increases in council-set tariffs lag significantly behind any real-life increases in costs. This would impact owners' profitability and therefore reduce the funds available for wages, vehicle purchases and maintenance etc., standards of staff and vehicles and especially levels of staffing would slip in this area where the minimum wage is not sufficient to attract staff.”

Others perceived that an operator set tariff was necessary to maintain and promote choice for the customer:

“By allowing individual operators to set their own tariffs I believe the customer is better served and given greater variety.”

And others articulated that the maintenance of an operator set tariff was necessary to promote healthy competition:

“Currently South Oxfordshire taxi users benefit from good competition on quality and price from a number of different providers. This is due to the free market that SODC has adopted and should remain so.”

6. CONTACT DETAILS

For further information please contact:

Louise Wheeler

Landline: 01865 596771

Mobile: 0778 6925969

Email: louise.wheeler@insightoxford.co.uk

Appendix A
Public Consultation Questionnaire



HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF RESEARCH - SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE AND VALE OF WHITE HORSE USERS' SURVEY 2013

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have commissioned Insight Oxford to conduct independent research to gauge the level of support among taxi users, and potential taxi users, for possible changes to the way prices are set for hackney carriages. This price is known as the tariff.

(The findings will directly inform decisions made by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils about the future of hackney carriage tariffs. The consultation runs from 15/04/13 to 28/05/13 and also involves obtaining relevant views from providers of hackney carriage services in both districts.

The data will be collected, managed and reported by Insight Oxford who fully adhere to the Market Research Society's code of conduct and will ensure that the anonymity of all respondents is preserved.

If you take part in the survey you will have the opportunity to be entered into a free prize draw to WIN £50 worth of vouchers from a store of your choice)

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU

1.	What is your age?	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	Under 16	Thanks for your time. You need to be over 16 to take part in this survey. (Go to end)				

2.	Do you, or are you ever likely to, use hackney carriages in the South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse district areas? <i>By "hackney carriage" we mean taxis hailed from the street or taken from a taxi rank or pre-booked, they are usually found at a railway station, bus station or in town centres. They may be 'London' taxis or look like ordinary cars with a box or light on their roof showing the company name and the vehicle number</i>				
	Yes in South Oxfordshire - includes Didcot, Wallingford, Thame & Henley	Yes in Vale of White Horse includes Abingdon, Wantage, Botley & Faringdon	Yes in both districts	No	

3.	If No please say why you don't use hackney carriages?
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4.	Would you like to be entered into the free prize draw with the chance of winning a £50 voucher from a store of your choice? <i>If YES we need you to provide your contact details so that we can reach you if you win. These details will not be used for any other reason and results will remain anonymous</i> (The draw will take place no later than 18/06/13)	Yes	No (Go to Q8)
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Appendix A continued



5.	Your name	
6.	Your contact 'phone number	
7.	Your email address	

Information about Hackney carriage tariffs:

We are going to ask your opinion about who should set hackney carriage tariffs to control fares - first about South Oxfordshire, then about Vale of White Horse.

Councils can set tariffs to ensure that all hackney carriage vehicles that are licensed in their area (when hailed, hired from a rank or pre-booked) charge consistent fares to customers. The tariff acts by setting maximum fare rates according to a range of factors including time of day or night and special occasions such as Bank Holidays. Taxi operators may charge less than the council set tariff but must not exceed it.

This example tariff (show example) is the one currently in place in Vale of White Horse. This research does not focus on the level of fares contained in tariff(s) but who they should be set by.

SECTION 2: SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF

Includes: DIDCOT, WALLINGFORD, THAME, HENLEY

Currently hackney carriage operators in South Oxfordshire set their own individual tariffs.

8.	In South Oxfordshire, would you prefer a hackney carriage tariff set by individual operators or by the district council?	Set by individual operators	Set by district council	Don't know/no opinion
Please comment to help explain your answer if you wish:				

Appendix A continued



SECTION 3: VALE OF WHITE HORSE HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF

Includes: ABINGDON, WANTAGE, BOTLEY, FARINGDON

The Vale of White Horse District Council has a council set hackney carriage tariff (show example). The council would like to know your views on whether this should be kept or removed. If the tariff is removed hackney carriage operators would set their own individual tariffs.

9. In the Vale of White Horse, do you think that the council should / should not retain its set tariff?			
Yes, retain current council set tariff without changes (please comment below)	Yes retain the tariff but with changes (please comment on your preferred changes)	No, remove the tariff (please comment below)	Don't know/no opinion
Please comment to help explain your answer if you wish:			

SECTION 4: MORE ABOUT YOU

So that we can understand the preference of different groups of residents, it would be very useful if you could tell us a bit about yourself:

10. Are you male or female?	Male	Female
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11. Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more? Please include problems related to old age	Yes	No
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12. On average, how often do you use a hackney carriage vehicle in South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse areas?	5 times a week or more	1-4 times a week	Every 2-3 weeks	Monthly	Every 2-3 months	1-3 times per year	Less than once a year
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13. How frequently do you use a hackney carriage vehicle for the following South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse district areas?			
To get to/from place of work	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never
Visiting friends or relatives	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never
When out for leisure	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never
Shopping	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never
Going to medical appointments	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never
Other (please specify)	Regularly (once a month or more)	Occasionally (less than once a month)	Never

[Appendix B](#)
[South Providers' Consultation Questionnaire](#)



HAVE YOUR SAY about
 hackney carriage tariffs in
 your area

HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF RESEARCH – SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE PROVIDERS' SURVEY 2013

South Oxfordshire District Council has commissioned Insight Oxford to conduct independent research to gauge the level of support amongst taxi providers for potential changes to the way prices are set for hackney carriages. The research **does not** relate to private hire vehicles (ordinary cars or minibuses with no roof box that can only do pre-booked journeys for pre-agreed fares).

This consultation, which runs from 15/04/13 to 28/05/13, also involves obtaining relevant views from users, and potential users, of hackney carriage services in South Oxfordshire. The findings will directly inform decisions made by South Oxfordshire District Council about the future of hackney carriage tariffs.

The data will be collected, managed and reported by Insight Oxford who fully adhere to the Market Research Society's code of conduct and will ensure that the anonymity of all respondents is preserved.

You can complete this survey on-line via this URL <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HCTSOUTHPROVIDERSLIVE>

This can also be accessed using this QR Code:



It is very short and will take **just a few minutes** to complete.

Each respondent is eligible to complete the survey ONCE only.

If you have a strong preference for completing a paper copy of the survey (instead of the on-line version) please contact Louise Wheeler on 01865 596771 or email louise.wheeler@insightoxford.co.uk

Please also use these contact details if you require any further information about the research.

Thanks, in advance, for taking the time to have your say

Appendix B continued



HAVE YOUR SAY about
hackney carriage tariffs in
your area

SECTION 1: YOUR INVOLVEMENT

Only certain people are eligible to provide responses to this survey i.e. those involved in the provision of taxi services in South Oxfordshire District Council area. For this reason, we need to collect some important information to allow us to verify your eligibility to take part. We will not pass this on to anyone else and all results will be reported anonymously.

1.	Are you a private hire/hackney carriage driver or taxi operator licensed by South Oxfordshire District Council? If NO, thanks for your time, this survey is only relevant to those who operate out of South Oxfordshire District Council. (go to end of survey)	Yes	No
2.	If Yes, what is your driver's badge number? _____		
3.	What is your name? _____		
4.	What firm do you currently drive for? If you don't currently drive a taxi please answer N/A _____		
5.	Do you own or part-own a taxi firm that provides hackney carriage services? If YES, please tell us which firm _____	Yes	No
6.	Are you a licensed private hire operator? If YES, please tell us which firm _____	Yes	No
7.	Are you a representative of a relevant trade association? If YES, please tell us which one _____	Yes	No
8.	If Yes, how many members do you represent? _____		

Appendix B continued



HAVE YOUR SAY about hackney carriage tariffs in your area

SECTION 2: HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFFS

We are going to ask your opinion about who should set the hackney carriage tariff in South Oxfordshire. An example tariff template is provided below. Currently hackney carriage operators set their own individual tariffs.

Please note that this research is not intended to focus on the level of fares contained in tariff(s) but who they should be set by. If a council set tariff were to be introduced the council would be legally obliged to consult with the trade before setting the tariff.

9.	Would you prefer a hackney carriage tariff set by individual operators or by South Oxfordshire District Council?	Set by individual operators	Set by district council	Don't know/no opinion
Please comment to help explain your answer if you wish:				

SECTION 3: ABOUT YOU

So that we can understand the preference of different groups of hackney carriage providers, it would be very useful if you could tell us a bit about yourself:

10.	Are you male or female?	Male	Female
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11.	What is your age?	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
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Thank you for having your say!

Appendix B continued



HAVE YOUR SAY about hackney carriage tariffs in your area

Example Hackney Carriage Tariff Template

Structured Tariff					
For any journey inclusive of VAT (if applicable) For journeys starting:	Vehicles up to 4 seats			Vehicles with more than 4 seats carrying 5 or more passengers	
	06:00 – 22:59	Tariff 1			Tariff 2
23:00 - 01:59	Tariff 2			Tariff 4	
And all day on Sundays, Bank Holidays, Public Holidays & Easter Sunday and 20:00 - 23:59 Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve					
02:00 – 05:59	Tariff 3			Tariff 5	
And all day Christmas Day, Boxing Day & New Year's Day. Henley Regatta and Festival					
	Tariff 1	Tariff 2	Tariff 3	Tariff 4	Tariff 5
Flag fall					
Inclusive 1/10's mile					
Subsequent 176 yd or 161 m (1/10 mile)					
Waiting time per minute or part thereof					
Soiling Charge £75					

[Appendix C](#)
[Email to South Oxfordshire Citizens' Panel](#)

South Oxfordshire Taxi Tariffs - User Survey 2013

As a valued member of South Oxfordshire District Council's Citizens' Panel we are inviting you, on their behalf, to take part in an important consultation about taxi tariffs.

If you take part in the survey you will have the opportunity to be entered into a free prize draw to WIN £50 worth of vouchers from a high street store of your choice.

South Oxfordshire District Council have commissioned Insight Oxford to conduct independent research to gauge the level of support among taxi users and potential users for possible changes to the way prices are set for hackney carriage vehicles. This price is known as the tariff.

Hackney carriage vehicles are those taxis that can be hailed from the street, taken from taxi ranks or pre-booked. They may be 'London' taxis or look like ordinary cars with a box or light on their roof showing the company name and the vehicle number. This research does not relate to private hire vehicles (ordinary cars or minibuses with no roof box that can only do pre-booked journeys for pre-agreed fares).

What Happens Next?

The data will be collected, managed and reported by Insight Oxford. We fully adhere to the Market Research Society's code of conduct and will ensure that the anonymity of all respondents is preserved.

The findings will directly inform decisions made by South Oxfordshire District Council about the future of hackney carriage tariffs.

** How To Take Part

You have until 5pm on 28th May 2013 to take part.

You can complete the survey on-line via this URL:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/hctusersurveylive>

Or go to this link and you can use the QR code to access the survey via your Smartphone or tablet:

[https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/southandvale/legal_and_democratic_services/lic/taxi tariff_users](https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/southandvale/legal_and_democratic_services/lic/taxi_tariff_users)

The survey is very short and will take just a few minutes to complete.

If you have a strong preference for completing a paper copy of the survey (instead of the on-line version) please contact Louise Wheeler at Insight Oxford to request one.

01865 596771

louise.wheeler@insightoxford.co.uk

It will need to be posted back to us by 25th May 2013.

To complete this survey you must be at least 16 years of age. Each respondent is eligible to complete the survey ONCE only.

Thanks, in advance, for taking the time to have your say!

[Appendix D](#)
[Taxi Operator's Email to Customers](#)

>>> "[name of taxi operator]> 14/05/2013 16:33 >>>

Dear [name of recipient]

[name of taxi operator] need a few minutes of your time please!

This is very important for [name of taxi operator].

South Oxfordshire District Council are currently in the process of unifying their Taxi Policy with Vale of White Horse District Council. A key difference between the two councils current policy is tariff control.

South Oxfordshire has always in the past allowed the local operators to set their own tariffs. This has seen the development of several good service providers competing for custom on price and quality.

Vale has always taken the opposite approach with Councillors setting tariffs and dictating to taxi companies the maximum that they can charge for a journey. This can result in low service levels and very little competition between operators.

The officers of the two Councils are currently consulting with the public on whether they should follow their chosen path of introducing tariff control in South Oxfordshire, to match that in the Vale.

This would have a dramatic effect on the service [name of taxi operator] are able to offer, the quality of our vehicles and the employed status of our drivers.

Please can you take just a few minutes to answer a short survey and support our view that it is best for taxi users if taxi companies can compete freely on price and service?

The survey can be found at the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/hctusersurveylive>

We would greatly appreciate your support and would be delighted if you passed this message on.

[name of taxi operator]

[\[website of taxi operator\]](#)

[Appendix E](#)
[South Oxfordshire District Council's Taxi Forum Invitation](#)

Dear Driver/Operator,

TAXI FORUM:

Tuesday 23 April 2013, 12:00 to 14:00, Council Chamber, South Oxfordshire District Council Offices, Crowmarsh Gifford

The consultation on hackney carriage tariffs started on the 15 April 2013 and runs until 28 May 2013.

The Council is using Insight Oxford, an independent company, to run the consultation. One of their team will be at the taxi forum to explain how the consultation will work and how you can have your say as a member of the taxi trade.

To take part in the survey online, please visit the link below between the 15 April and the 28 May 2013. You may wish to respond to the consultation after the forum. However, please note that you can only enter the survey once.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HCTSOUTHPROVIDERSLIVE>

This can also be accessed on a smartphone or tablet using this QR Code:



You will need your badge number to complete the survey.

If you have a strong preference for completing a paper copy of the survey please contact Louise Wheeler, Insight Oxford on 01865 596771 or email louise.wheeler@insightoxford.co.uk

The survey closes on the 28 May 2013 at 17:00.

The Licensing Committee will consider the results of the consultation early in July. The date of the Licensing Committee meeting will be set after the Council elections on 2 May. It is our intention to take a recommendation from the Licensing Committee to full Council on the 18 July 2013.

Please check the Council's website at:
<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=126>
for final dates and times of committee meetings after 7 June 2013.

Yours faithfully

Robert Draper
Shared Team Leader Licensing

Appendix E continued

Taxi Forum



Listening Learning Leading

AGENDA

Tuesday 23 April 2013, 12:00 am – 14:00 pm

Council Chamber, SODC Council Offices, Crowmarsh Gifford

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Presentation on taxi tariff consultation
3. Issues arising from new policy
4. Questions and answers
5. Finish 14:00 prompt

Notes:

<p>Q9: South Tariff Question - 50 x comments; 39 no comments</p>	
<p>1 Britain is a free market economy 2 Hedonic Pricing' operational costs are different for different company's example [specific firm mentioned] top range new cars top class drivers highly serviced cars working 24hrs compared to some other firms in in the area old cars poor servicing records in the past you have checked these other companys and found cars with bald tyres no insurance licences out of date etc etc 3 take a look at the vales taxi ranks as an example those drivers are finding it hard to make a living on the fixed rate set by the council hence tatty cars grumpy drivers do you really want the same thing happening to south oxfordshire just when didcot is expanding 4 some of our clients change taxi companys when there companys are cost cutting but soon return when they find out why other companys are able to charge less you get what you pay for 5 if [specific firm mentioned] are forced to charge less this will lead to job cuts and reduce hours of service to the public so when westminster calls we might not have a driver available at short notice to bring back the ministers and lords home let alone the other people that have been left stranded by other taxi firms because they have gone home due to lack of incoming finances 6 DONT TRY FIXING SOMETHING THAT IS NOT BROKE Allowing operator's to set their own rate encourages a wide range of vehicles to be used and therefore provides customers with choice.</p>	
<p>At present South Oxfordshire has the perfect balance of both budget and premier taxis providers. To remove that choice would disadvantage the travelling population of the district. In an age when competition is encouraged throughout all parts of an integrated transportation policy, when train and bus fares have been de-regulated it would be folly to then regulate the taxi providers. A case in point is the Vale of the White horse district council has had regulation for years and as a consequence the general taxi service is appalling with poorly maintained vehicles and drivers who look disgraceful. It would be an outrage should the council take us down this route. By allowing individual operators to set their own tariffs I believe the customer is better served and given greater variety. Individually set tariffs will still be competitive as operators are naturally competing with each other for customers. In my experience the vast majority of operators behave professionally and know it is not in their best interest to "rip off" the customer.</p>	
<p>Charges should relate to each individual businesses costs not an arbitrary figure decided by other bodies.</p>	
<p>Currently south Oxfordshire taxi users benefit from good competition on quality and price from a No of different providers. Due to the free market that SODC has adopted and should remain so.</p>	
<p>Each driver knows his costs involved in running a taxi and what he needs to charge to make a living wage, too high and he gets no customers, too low and he goes out of business. Already the Council has increased the running costs of a vehicle which inturn has increased the cost to the customer.</p>	
<p>Each operator can vary so much from another operator, for example, the type, quality, cleanliness and cost of the vehicle being used, the presentation e.g. personal appearance of the driver him or herself.. To maintain higher standards will invariably incur higher costs therefore the tariff setting must be left to the operator to decide which sector of the market they aim for .These are over and above the basic standard requirements, I believe there must be some range of flexibility . My second point relates to the cost of implementing and policing the suggested system. The above tariff is an example, it is very complicated and could prove difficult to enforce and use up valuable council time and manpower. The public are quite able to choose between one company or another , whether their choice is economy or luxury . This should not be the job of the Council</p>	
<p>Fares set by individual operators enable the operators to determine the range of services offered, the quality of their fleet and the employment status of their drivers. Additionally users benefit from competition on quality and price between service providers. As a service user the difference in standard (particularly vehicle quality) between Vale and SODC taxis is marked.</p>	
<p>First of all there is no need to use meters as i believe there is not enough work to cover the costs for the meter. Secondly if meters are going to be used then the council should set the tariff because this will eliminate any arguments among the drivers and customers for over charging as the driver can provide the customer with a tariff chart set by the council for the meter if the customer thinks they are being overcharged.</p>	
<p>Freedom of choice and to be fairly competitive.</p>	
<p>Having the local authority set the fares seems a bit socialist to me. The correct mechanism for setting the fares must be the market. If an operator chooses to provide a premium product, and the public is prepared to pay a premium price for it, what business of it is the council to drag all companies down to the level of the lowest? You only have to look at VoWHDC to see all the crappy cars they run around in because they cannot charge a premium rate for a premium product. If an operator chooses to go for the bottom of the market, they are at liberty to charge what they like. the local authority can only set maximum fares not minimum ones. If operators use 10 year old Nissan Bluebird, offer a haphazard service for £2.50 a mile, and that is what the market wants, they will flourish. This just seems like a power grab by the controlling group on the council, the consultation process has proved our elected representatives don't understand what makes the taxi market work, and they should leave well Having used the free market approach for 39 years, why in this age of austerity change the system. With the increase of fuel prices, as a 'Self Employed' driver life is difficult enough, please leave tariffs to the free market, as some service providers do not recognise the status quo?</p>	
<p>Historically any increases in council-set tariffs lag significantly behind any real-life increases in costs. This would impact owners' profitability and therefore reduce the funds available for wages, vehicle purchases and maintenance etc., standards of staff and vehicles and especially levels of staffing would slip in this area where the minimum wage is not sufficient to attract staff. Allowing operators to set tariffs will also allow them to differentiate themselves by price point.</p>	
<p>I agree than should be a fixe tariff for all companies and set by SODC. No more than 3 tariffs. First Tariff day time (7.00 to 22.00) monday to sunday Second Tariff night time (22.00 to 7.00) monday to sunday Third Tariff all day Bank Holiday, Boxing Day, Christmas Day, New Years Day, Public Holidays, Easter Sunday.</p>	
<p>I AM A SELF EMPLOYED OWNER DRIVER WORKING ALONE MOST OF MY WORK IS AIRPORT TRANSFERS AND I HAVE A SET FARE FOR THESE JOURNEYS, OTHER JOURNEYS PRICES QUOTED BY A MILEAGE RATE BEFORE THE JOURNEY COMMENCES. I NEVER CHARGE EXTRA FOR WORKING ON WEEKENDS OR BANK HOLIDAYS AND FEEL IT IS UNFAIR TO EXPECT ME TO WORK AT A TARIFF SET BY OTHER COMPANIES IN TOWN THAT HAVE FLOODED THE TOWN WITH FOREIGN DRIVERS AND WANT TO WORK OFF OF A METER THE WHOLE TIME</p>	
<p>I believe the public will be better protected, if the council sets the rate and makes it compulsory for all drivers to fit sealed metres to prevent unscruples drivers changing tarriffes mid journey.</p>	
<p>I believe the rate should be the same for every company to stop some companies over charging customers. I believe this rate should be Tariff 1. £4 first mile then £2 per mile thereafter as a minimum.</p>	
<p>I don't think there should a meter. But if the meter is going to be used then the council should set the tariff because i believe the tariff rate should be fixed for every one as this will eliminate confussion for the customer.</p>	
<p>I feel it is essential for operators to set their own charges as they know what they need to charge to run their business successfully and to be able to provide and maintain a proper, professional service to the public of South Oxfordshire</p>	
<p>I have worked in the taxi industry in SODC for over 25 years and based our service on quality and price. Having the freedom to set our own tariff benefits the public through competition, encouraging a good standard of service and giving us repeat business. We set our rates according to current cost and have the freedom to adjust them as required. Council set rates may well be suitable for hail and rank where the majority of the work is urban. In rural areas such as the area I work there is a mix of hackney and private hire work. The setting of a rate would mean that a great deal of private hire work would be uneconomical thus creating a poorer service for some of the community. We run a computerised booking system which already works out the fare for the driver, making both the meter needless and giving the customer a cost prior to the commencement of the journey. To date I am not aware of any complaints regarding our rates. How does the VAT work?</p>	
<p>I need to be able to run a cost effective business, setting our own tariff - also lets the market decide!</p>	
<p>i Strong Prefer to set tariff by Operator .</p>	
<p>I strongly believe that SODC should set the tariffs, this would avoid any conflicts every operator driver would be working from the same set of tariff set by the authorities. At present there are many issues where there are different rates, this is unfair on the public as one week for the same journey they may pay £10.00 but the following week someone is asking them to pay £15.00, when the tariffs are set this avoids any confusions or misunderstandings. However for operators if they decide to charge a lower tariff then the one set by the council they should have that option and this should only apply for phone bookings, this should strictly only apply to private phone bookings but they should not be able to charge any more then the set rate. All drivers operating from any of the hackney stands in SOD should strictly work from the set</p>	
<p>I think it's best if the council decides on tariff as it would be better for the public to have a uniform tariff to avoid dispute. Also, I wish the council will consider the expenses of the drivers and set tariffs accordingly, whilst taking into account the best interests of the drivers. In addition, with regards to pre booked hires on telephone, the council should set the tariff from the place the driver sets off from and NOT the pick up place of the clients. For example, if I am requested to pick someone up from Dorchester and take them to Barronsfield, then I should be charging them from the place I start driving usually Wallingford, in order to cover my fuel costs.</p>	
<p>I think the council should decide the tariff as this will eliminate any arguments among the drivers and customers. I WOULD LUKE TARIFF TO BE SET BY SOUTHOXFORDSHIRE COUNCIL. I would prefer a hackney carriage tariff to be set by individual operators because would give more flexibility to operators and customers to agree on the value of the fare. This way, I believe, the market would set a fare price , from which can be benefit everybody.</p>	

<p>If a company decides that it wishes to provide a high end service and product, then they should be eligible to charge whatever tariff they wish. The client would decide if these tariffs were to high by not using the taxis. As a driver there has been, on very limited occasions a refusal to pay a tariff when asked for an estimated price, but to counter this I can say that many of my passengers are very happy to pay for the service that we as a company provide. Free enterprise should be at the heart of any industry and within reason a company should be allowed to charge what it feels is reasonable for the service it provides, good quality costs a little extra and the customer will always make the decision that best suits them</p>	
<p>If a tariff was set this could seriously affect the range of services that companies could offer, the quality of the transport, for example specialists vehicles for the disabled, as well as the employment status of myself and other drivers.</p>	
<p>If council wants to have the meters fitted in the taxi then tariff should be set by the council as well other wise its like not having a meter in the Taxi , because every individual will set their own fair and they will charge what ever they want which they are doing so any way , so what is the point having a taxi meter . i would say leave it as it is and don't bother about meters please , because it is another expense on our heads for nothing and it's already getting hard for us to even survive in this time that we are going through that every thing is sky high like (fuel , insurance etc...) . Thanks .</p>	
<p>In regards to taxi tariffs I think the council should set the tariff</p>	
<p>It is imperative that the operator sets his own tariff as the operator is the only person that knows what the running costs are for the business and what he needs to charge to cover these costs and be able to provide a quality service. Having the meter will ensure that the customers can see what he is being charged and therefore not being ripped off by the driver. The meter will be checked against the CLEARLY displayed tariff card when the vehicle is taken in for its compliance test. And any variance will mean that the compliance certificate WILL NOT be issued. Once the operator has set his tariff he must notify the council as what his tariff is in writing. If the operator wants to change his tariff he them must give the council 30 days notice in writing before he changes it. This will prevent an operator from raising his prices just for a special event (Henley Regatta) and then immediately lowering them again. As the operator would have to advise the council in writing any tariff change and not be able to change the tariff for at least 30 day from issuing the council the letter. Therefore if he had raised his tariff for the event he would have to use the higher tariff for at least the next 30 days which could cause the customer to decide to not to use the operator due to his higher charges</p>	
<p>It will be more fair if their was same tariff</p>	
<p>It will make the market more competitive, and will allow companies to set a charge which is in keeping with the standard of service that they offer. If the district council set the tariff then I think the standard of service within the industry will fall and possibly car safety may be compromised.</p>	
<p>meters should not be used. But if they are going to be used then the council should set the tariff as this reduce any confusion among customer's.</p>	
<p>people run there own buisnesses to pay tax and bills.they donot tell other people what people can earn or not.If they wish to set there tariff to high they will not get no work TO low they will go BUST.</p>	
<p>South Oxfordshire taxi users benefit from competition on quality and price between several service providers and to maintain such quality and competition tariffs would be better set by operators.</p>	
<p>Tariffs set by district council could lead to some operators going out of business, if not enough to be profitable. No one runs a business at a loss. Operators understand the demands set by their customers and what's needed to meet them.</p>	
<p>The current system allows consumers to choose the level of service they require, represented by the value of service currently supplied by licensed (and unlicensed!) operators in SODC at rates that reflect the nature of their companies and the level of investment into their business. Introducing a tariff brings all operators down to the common lowest denominator - price. This presents 2 problems to the consumer. 1/ The lower the fee/tariff the less likelihood of operators investing in clean, well maintained cars combined with the likelihood that this will lead to increased unreliability of service as a result. 2/ As a result the higher quality service providers will be forced out of the market because reduced fees prevents investment and attention to detail which inevitably leads to a lack of choice for the consumer. Currently, the market operates on supply and demand - the consumer can choose a less expensive model to fit their budget, either hackney or pre-booked, or a higher added value service that they agree in advance to book at what they know will be a slightly higher rate. The important factor for the authorities to continue to focus on is the infiltration of hackney operators from outside the respective licensed areas that dramatically reduce the income of SODC licensed operators. In turn this diminishes their ability to</p>	
<p>The district council sometimes have unrealistic prices that some customers can not afforded. whereas individuals can pick a rate according to the distant rather than the fixed rate created by the council.</p>	
<p>The district council would set a generic tariff that will not comprehensively reflect what each individual taxi provider and or drivers service provided. There are many composing factors that would affect the tariff that would need to be in-cooperated into the Tariff and the results would mean some firms would loose out while others gained. This in turn would create an unfair culture not reflecting what the true value of the service provided. Also each journey taken by the drivers is different for example a journey into c.london may take 2.5 hours in rush hour while the same length journey to another part of the country could take 40 minuets. It would be unfair in this instance to charge a generic fee. It does not fairly reflect the service the operator and the taxi driver have made. Setting a generic fee will also cause boundaries and restriction on what the taxi driver and operators are willing to provide thus affecting the service as a whole. Individual fees would therefore be more appropriate in</p>	
<p>The local market benefits from competition on quality and price between several service providers. This can only be maintained if individual providers retain pricing control. Enforced tariffs by a third party would inevitably result in a reduction in quality of vehicles and potential reduction in full-time drivers being employed.</p>	
<p>There are many levels of service quality available. Promptness, cleanliness and reliability necessitates higher fares. Our many established clients are happy to pay a small premium for our service. We prefer not to be lumped with all other providers.</p>	
<p>THERE IS A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF SERVICE OFFERED, THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENT TYPE OF CAR AND QUALITY PROVIDED, A MEMBER OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO BOOK CARS SHOULD HAVE THE CHOICE OF QUALITY AND SERVICE TO SUIT THEIR NEEDS AND AFFORDABILITY, THE STANDARD AND PRESENTATION OF DRIVERS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO MANY CLIENTS.</p>	
<p>This allows operators to determine the quality of service (e.g. uniformed drivers, model/age of vehicles) and gives customers the opportunity to choose the preferred balance between service and cost.</p>	
<p>This is will make a set standard for every taxi in south Oxfordshire also it will help the council officer and compliance tester.</p>	
<p>To keep the uniformity of tariff</p>	
<p>To keep things fair and equal. Also all customers will know the exact price so there won't be any arguments between drivers and customers.</p>	
<p>With drivers charging different rates from the taxi ranks, I believe this is bad for business. With one rate which is set by the council, it will be better for business.</p>	

<p>Q3 If NO please say why You don't use hackney carriages: 92 comments; 49 no comments</p>
Always know in advance if taxi needed and will book with a firm
Always pre book taxi [specific firm mentioned]
Arrange pick up from home / airport most of time
Can't afford them
Can't afford them
Can't afford them
Didn't know they were avail in our area, and not sure I would trust using them? Unknown quantity.
Don't know
don't live in the area
Dont Live in the Oxford area.
Don't really go out that often and if I do then I would pre order a taxi.
drive or get a lift
easier to book in advance with [specific firm mentioned], rarely need to hail taxi
Expensive
Have a car and generally Taxi's aren't found in my village
Have a car, and a bus pass.
have car
have car or use bus
Have not needed one.
Have own traansport.
I am a car driver and live in a village. Taxis therefore aren't easily available for short journeys,they only seem to be interested in airport trips etc
I can't remember the last time I used a taxi. I just prefer to drive or use the bus.
I can't remember the last time I used any taxi.
I cycle everywhere, it's cheaper
I do park and ride to Oxford or get friends to drop me off.
I drive everywhere
I drive or use a bus
I drive or we book a [specific firm mentioned] Cab
I have a car
I have a car
I have a car
I have a car
I have a car and I don't drink
I have my own car
I have my own car and can usually obtain lifts from friends if the situation means I can't drive
I have no experience of this taxi company & I would always go with [specific firm mentioned] as they have never let me down
I just don't
I just don't need them
I like to pre-book my Taxis to be certain of one
I live so near Oxford that we use Oxford based taxis and they charge normal Oxofrd taxi tariffs out to Botley
I only book cabs in advance + ask the price first
I prefer low carbon transport
I prefer to use a company either for cash or account as they have beetr quality of cars and service, plus I only ever pre-book a car.
I use them for the centre of oxford and drive to South Oxfordhire
i usually drive.
I walk everwhere
I walk or drive myself when local
I would cycle if short distance. Drive my own car if long.
inconvenient
My parents drive me
My son drives me
N/A
Never had the need
Never had the need to
Never on time, cycle or get a lift
No need
No need - have car and bus pass
No need, would use other form of transport; probably car, due to expense and lack of availability. There are no hackney carriages where I live.
not in those areas
not necessary
Not viable for use for our journeys in Oxford
Only use taxi for business use, then would use chauffeur car as company policy
Our company uses [specific firm mentioned] and are prebooked

Own car is more generally more convenient and cheaper
Own my own vehicle
Prefer booking and knowing they will arrive
prefer to use trusted and reliable companies I know about
Private company [specific firm mentioned] Didcot for Airport and other transportation services - invoiced
suspect fares are over priced.
There never seems to be the need
They are too expensive
Too dear - use the bus
too expensive
Too expensive
Too expensive
Too expensive in heavy traffic. I use taxi in less busy time
too expensive!
too expensive, prefer to book and know what you are paying in advance
Travel by car or bus
Unpleasant and expensive
Use bus or car
Use car or bicycle
use local taxi firms
Use own car or bus pass
Use pre booked taxis - private hire
Use [specific firm mentioned]
use [specific firm mentioned]
use rthe bus
Use the bus
Used once, price is too high from Abingdon to Oxford
USUALLY TOO EXPENSIVE
We always pre-book our hire cars
<i>Q8. South Oxfordshire tariff question - 290 comments: 469 no comment</i>
1 size does not fit all. Competition among operator should be allowed.
A degree of consistency/control
A fixed tariff does not encourage providers to be competitive. It leads to monopoly and complacency. In South Oxfordshire there are two large companies [specific firm mentioned] and Harolds [specific firm mentioned] who are constantly kept on their toes by competition.
A Set Tariff would assist users in that they would not need to negotiate the best deal with the Driver
A standard tariff doesn't permit for an operator to differentiate themselves - ie work in a more premium space and offer a quality service which I want - the customer will ultimately decided if the price is too much. There is no need for tariff control especially with social media playing such an important role in any business behavior these days. Maybe your time would be better invested in setting up a rating system (hygiene standards) for the firms / people you are trying to control encouraging feedback from customers.
Allow competition and let operators to lower or increase the fare based on the level of service they provide.
allow market forces to determine tariffs
Allowing individual operators to set a tariff allows me the choice of using low cost low service or higher cost for premium service.
Allowing operators to set their own tariffs will result in increased prices.
Allowing the individual operator to set their tariff allows for differentiation in the field of quality and service. I agree that a maximum tariff should be set by the district council for instances where service is provided through hailing on the street or the taxi rank. In these instances the public are not able to choose provider due to immediate availability or through the process of queueing. In the instance a member of the public chooses to pre-book a service, here the individual operator may use decide to differentiate their offer, e.g. better cars, better of service. Under these circumstances, where the public are informed on their choice, the operator should have the ability to set their own tariff, thus making a competitive market place.
Although no tariff or tax is preferred, the tariff should be set by the council in order to avoid one operator charging more tariff then the other.
Common tariff for the common good.
Always seems very fair - [specific firm mentioned]
Any taxis I use should have a meter so you are aware of the fare anyway, but as I tend to only use a private company cars you can ask for the cost beforehand and it's then up to you if you accept or not.
Apply consistent tariff for all operators. Will ensure you know in advance what the maximum charge will be when considering booking a taxi, or hailing one. Allows operators to discount if they choose.
As a business owner I feel an operator would be too restricted to offer the a level of service they aim to provide if they have a pre set tariff. I understand it would keep a fair playing field for some companies but would would not allow some to offer that little bit extra which as a user I prefer. I am happier to pay more for a better level of service and a nicer car than mabe the average.
As a company we use a chauffeur driven service which is excellent when visitors come into Heathrow. I understand that they would not be able to offer the same level of service if they were limited on price
As in any business thry and should have consistent fares for all passengers yet they should also be allowed to set there own tariff and you would hope they are fair and competitive.
as long as in line with market and competition
As long as the cab drivers get a fair deal
as long as there is competition in the market, I cannot uderstand wanting the district council involved, looks like going back 50 years
At least you know what you're getting

Balanced perception here - DC-setting would result in consistency, operator setting would encourage competition (but also cost-cutting!) because it allows operators to be more flexible with the service they provide - market will find the right level
Better service and more competitive
Businesses should be capable of deciding their own prices so as to allow the market place to determine their value for money and they (the operators) have the best knowledge of what is needed. It maintains a competitive playing field.
but Maximum tariffs set by district council. this should also encourage competition and "pre-booking" at lower rates.
By allowing operators to set their own tariffs it gives choice both in who you use and the quality of what you get
Can't compare with other systems
Combination of both
Competition invariably means that the user/customer receives better service.
Competition should mean lower prices and better services.
Consistency is important to avoid being overcharged but its not suggest cheap just value for money
Consistency of pricing seems helpful
Council will rip you off
Creates competitive pricing which will benefit users.
Depends what's cheaper
Didcot taxis are a rip-off when compared to Oxford and even London. I feel there is no moderation towards sensible pricing in the Didcot area. The council should work with the taxi companies in the first instance and then regulate if no way forward can be found.
Different levels of service are required by different levels of customers. Also competition is healthy for the economy
Different operators give different levels of service & vehicle so that we have a choice. There would b no choice if charges were the same and the better companies would b forced to cut costs.
District councils have a poor or imperfect view of the costs of running taxis.
Does not matter who sets the tariff as long as it is transparent and clear to customers
Don't trust operators to keep tariff low
Don't want to have to keep checking tariffs for each operator
Each operator should be allowed to compete on price and quality. Price control encourages poor standards and reduces the incentive for differentiation of service. For example, for a short ride on an evening out I might prefer a cheap and cheerful service. For a longer trip when I am on business, or if I am sending a car to collect a VIP, I would be want to pay more for a better quality service.
Encourage s differe t service providers to give differing ser ices according to the communities needs. Healthy competition and reinvestment in vehicles. Esse tial for a free economy and small business.
Encourages competition therefore good for the user
Ensure consistency and fair pricing
Ensures customers are not overcharged. Enables competitive pricing, if operators wish to adopt this approach
ensures quality and service are key drivers of competition, rather than having solely price as the key competition driver
Every taxi firm will have to change the same
Fairer
Fares should be set by a neutral body.
Feel that the District council would be fairer to customer's whan seeting tariff's.
First off, the tariff should be much much clearer than currently displayed. Basically it is 4.65 + 3.00 per mile or something like that, so to help figure it out I would like to see each cab have simple bold : min fair for 10 miles at the three time periods. Second, if you get in a taxi, with current GPS enabled phones/sat navs, it takes seconds to know the fair to a destination -- the traffic enabled phones even allow for the waiting time. It should be mandatory that the driver can give you a fixed cost if asked for -- it doesn't have to be by GPS, just that when you get in I want to know exactly what I will pay before I start the journey [I do accept that many drivers are prepared to currently negotiate this, which I appreciate.] The problem with individual operators setting the rate, is taxi ranks -- there is the understanding that you pick the first taxi in the rank -- not something that is easy if I need to read each and every cost plate -- maybe a colour coded system would work, but it would get like the 192 telephone directory services incomprehensible pricing of fixed costs + per mile + wait time.
For competition to exist, it must be up to the operators to calculate their costs and overheads and therefore how much (or how little) they should charge.
For equality
For local journeys (eg within 5 miles) it is frequently the case that the need for a taxi is urgent/unusual and competition is limited. Given this, there is a greater chance that taxi companies could abuse this to charge exhorbitant fees. Hence I support council control. For longer journeys (eg Airports etc) I am more likely to be able to select from a wide range of competing taxis/transport. If these cases, rates should be set by the taxi company
For pre-booked business use the operator may need to satisfy safety policies and operate at a higher level than taxis, in which case they should be able to agree the price for the elevated service
For pre-booked taxis I think the tariff should be set by the operator (as their is the chance to discuss/negotiate a price beforehand). For roadside hailed taxis the council should set the max tariff.
Free market economy must mean lower prices and competition - this is not a Police State yet
Free market must set the price.
Greater confidence in this option
Happy with the tariff set up the company we always use
Having a price set by the district council would imply that the standard of cars/drivers/companies are the same. This isn't the case. Is price fixing allowed in other industries - no. It's individual choice as to whom you would be driven by, as long as you get a price upfront and are happy then fine.
Healthy to keep competition, if all charge the same the quality of taxi services will drop. Have first hand experience of individual operator who does this and service is always first class as well as consistent and prices are good.
Hopefully to keep prices down
However there should be a maximum allowable charge set by the district council.
However, tariffs must be publicised so you know beforehand the likely charge. There should perhaps be a recommended maximum set by the council but taxi companies can charge as they wish provided they inform the customer beforehand whether their rate is higher or lower thereby giving the taxi company the opportunity to explain. Hailed taxis should should be limited to a maximum.
I am for private enterprise and not businesses controlled by the public sector.

I am happy about go green charges
I am happy to pay extra for better service - all taxi companies are not the same when it comes to cleanliness, time keeping and comfort.
I am happy to pay more for a clean well presented car and driver rather than some of the scruffy drivers and foul smelling cars I have been presented with in the Vale. If the Council wants to set the fares for taxis then maybe the Council should run a taxi service themselves! Prices should be set by the market not dictated to by Council.
I am prepared to pay a higher tariff to enjoy the excellent level of service that I receive from [specific firm mentioned]
I believe that were a single tariff to be imposed by the authority the levels of service and therefore choice would effectively be prescribed. I use a firm where I can book and I know it is more expensive than some operators but the service is better: the cars are better, the standard of service better, the staff better; it's all better but I am prepared to pay for it. If you flatten the playing field, by definition everyone will be trying to get to the same (low) standard with cheap cars, cheap drivers and average to poor service levels
i believe i would get better competition, it would enable providers to offer a service most relevant to their business model
I believe in a free market unless there is a compelling reason to control the market. I expect to pay in proportion to the quality and realibility of the service.
I believe in free competition to maximise value and service quality
I believe in open, free markets that encourage entrepreneurship, competition and choice for the consumer; all these lead to higher standards of service and efficiency. it beggars belief that this state interference is coming in to play in so free a market as the provision of taxi services..
I believe operators should be able to set their own rates, but they should have to set them at the point they renew their license for the next 12 months, and that these rates should be published by the local council in a standard format. I also believe all licenses should be for the same period (e.g Jan to December or similar).
I can then choose if I want cheap and cheerful or a better car for those nice evenings out
I cannot believe that fares we be reduced by competition.
I do not believe operators can be trusted. I understand that they charge what they want after midnight.
I don't know how much a taxi should cost
I don't know how that would affect the price. Use a particular company - price is set in advance and reliable.
I don't trust that we would get a fair price from the operators
I don't trust the council not to rip us off
I don't use taxis so it doesn't bother me
I feel that if I wish to pay a slightly higher premium for a nicer, more luxurious car with higher quality service, then that is my choice. If I want to pay a cheaper rate with Joe Bloggs then that option is available too. I feel that if the district council set the tariffs then the high end taxi services will lose money and not be able to continue to provide such a high service. It also means that if the district council sets a tariff somewhere inbetween the two current tariffs, the lower end taxis don't have any incentive to maintain their cars when they are getting a slightly higher rate than what they were previously getting.
I haven't really thought about it
I need more information as to how the level of a tariff is set. The aim should be to ensure that all legitimate companies can provide a good service with a fair but not excessive profit margin.
I only ever use [specific firm mentioned] because they are cheaper! Competition makes it cheaper.
I prefer to let market competition dictate the price and quality of the service.
I think it would be cheaper
I think it's important for a standard tariff to be set and used by everyone so you know what to expect. I don't want to have to check the price having flagged a driver down.
I think Operators should be consulted but never allowed to have the final say
I think setting a tariff is a good idea as it brings in a base line so customers should not be overcharged. There should be less disputes as the tariff is clear and open.
I think than will be better if will be set by council for all companies in south oxfordshire and vale but has to be a good first mile price for all of us. First mile for all £4 or £4.20 day time and than £0.20. First mile for all £5 or £5.20 night time and than 0.30. If the council will set up the tariffs make everyone from south or vale to change the metters please. Dont take parts, we are all taxi drivers and no one is better than other.
I think that setting by the district council would reduce the level of service - taxi firms would have no incentive to give that extra touch - if all are paid the same , why bother?
I think that the council needs to set the charges for taxi tariff's so that there is a degree of common sense applied to the charges. If left in the hands of the operator, profit and greed would come before what's fair and appropriate to charge for using a service licensed by the council.
I think the council are more trustworthy
I think the individual operators should as it's their business they pay the outing goings why should the council decide!! It could effect the quality of their service if they can't earn enough money to maintain high standards!! Unless the council are paying for that I don't know??!! Doubt it ! ..lol!!
I think the tariff should be clearly displayed, and the fare/tariff negotiable with driver
I think there should be a maximum tariff - but we have already discovered that there are cheaper and more expensive operators.
I think there should be smaller buses and more frequent. Public services should be under government control and everything else should be franchised.
I think they should be annually reviewed by the district council to make sure they are not all putting up their prices by huge amounts year on year, but I think businesses should be able to set their own prices.
I think this allows a range of services to be offered. If people want cheaper cabs, they can choose based on price. If I want something comfortable to take me to the airport, I can choose to pay more
I think this would ensure the quality of the driver and car if individual operators were allowed to set their own rate but perhaps to have a standard charging guideline which would be for both council areas.
I use service mainly for airport transfers and value reliable and safe cars. Some of the cars (and drivers) in the area I do not feel safe in.
I use taxis twice a day and find the that two taxi companies charge a difference of £20.00 for the same journey that is a lot of money. I am forced to use a smaller company that is less reliable as they are so much cheaper. I think if the tariffs were more guided by the council then the less reliable companies would have to up their game to stay in business. I believe over all the quality of taxi service will improve.

I use them and think it is fair
I used to drive a cab
I want a choice between operators and comfort level
I want a fixed tariff in a given area so that I don't get any too-unpleasant surprises when it is time to pay
I want the option of paying a premium to avoid a lowest common denominator service. The tariff should be the recommended price - not the maximum.
I would be very pleased if the taxi companies would set up a 'collect and deliver' service for local OAPs to get to the pub in the evening.
I would like there to be a maximum charge so that it is harder to be ripped off
I would like to have a choice of quality and price
I would prefer to use local taxi firms and usually always request the price to destination before I accept
I wouldn't trust the operators
If it was better than it is at the moment
If prices were uniform it means the customer can always estimate a journey price rather than fear not being able to afford the journey partway through. Also means you know you're not being ripped off.
If rates are set individually there will always be someone pitching their prices lower than others
If taxi companies feel that the market will pay more then they should be able to. I don't mind paying a bit more for a better service/better vehicles and better trained drivers. I don't believe operators will charge more than the market can afford as there is plenty of competition and if prices go up too much people will go elsewhere
If taxis are part of an integrated transport policy (which I think they should be) then a more holistic approach to the management of taxis and other transport options is required.
If the tariff is set by the operators it takes into account the cost of upkeeping the vehicles and staff training. Coming from an area which has council controlled tariffs it is clear that not all companies keep their fleet in good condition and staff training can also be patchy.
If the tariff is set then it unlikely that high standard taxi companies will be able to operate. I would use taxis much less in that case
I'm just not sure which is best
important for all sorts of reasons. A broad spectrum of taxi's are currently provided from the low budget, local carrier in a small business to the larger corporate and more expensive service providers. Free market competition such as this is healthy. under the proposed restriction, health and safety will be compromised because investment in new vehicles for the luxury market will immediately reduce and the out of hours service larger suppliers can provide will be cancelled, giving the 9 to 5 mentality across the board. No good, when you want to travel on a bank holiday or at 3am in the morning. Massive mistake if this goes through. Please please dont allow.
In an open market the customer wins if the service is set and delivered in a free market
In Didcot Taxi companies have little or no competition, only 2 companies
In Didcot there is some choice. If you want to take a client to an event there is access to high quality firms with great quality vehicles and drivers which clearly have a higher cost to the operator
Individual operators are best left to set their own fares. This fosters a competitive environment. If fares are capped by councils, the need for profit will lead to poor service, poor vehicles and poorly paid staff.
Individual operators will compete for rates, which may be a good thing and keep fares down but may also lead to higher fares. I trust the council rates would be constant and fair.
Individual operators, free to charge their own tariffs, will encourage competition and diversity of quality of service
It is a shame that both is not an option. For certain journeys a certain type of luxury and minimum standard is required. An example of which would be a journey to an airport. Whereas a local journey of say less than 5 miles, this is less important. The passenger is less likely to require travelling from pub to home in a Mercedes. Suggest that [specific firm mentioned] should run a [specific firm mentioned] Local, where the tariffs are set by the Council. And [specific firm mentioned] executive - where the existing business model, tariff set by competing companies is maintained. This ensures quality and type of service can be chosen by the customer and not by a tariff driving down the incentive of the company to provide an executive style of service
it is best for taxi users if taxi companies can compete freely on price and service
It is important for passengers to be offered a choice of levels of service. If they want cheap they know which companies to use, if they want a better service then likewise.
It is possible that if set by operatives that fairness would not apply and a price war may take place which would in the end not benefit the consumer.
It is unfair that some taxi companies can use s/employed drivers to keep fares low. All companies should operate on the same employment basis: either a driver is s/e or an employee, whatever that does to the tariff.
It is up to the consumer to choose a product, based on price, quality, reliability, past experiences. Setting fares will lead to less competition and an inability to offer a differentiated product. In all of my years of using Taxis for both pleasure and business I have had the ability to choose a service based on past experiences. I would only use reputable operators, that I trust and know. If firms operate a good service at the right price they will continue to receive my custom. I do not want the level of service restricted by fare limits. MS
It is up to the Taxi firms it is there business and then customers have a right to choose
It may help open up competition and reduce fares, rather than everyone currently charging the maximum they can.
It would be better if the charges were controlled
It would be like a ?? to have a tariff and they would feel they need to charge the max
It would ensure consistency and no unforeseen shocks
It would help ensure certainty and consistency of fares
It's better to have one flat rate
It's just more fair
It's more competitive
Keep prices reasonable, especially for the elderly. My Gran is old-fashioned and should really use taxis; at least until she gets her new hip.
Keep the stupid meddling council out of the business of running business. We elect those people, they decide they need to make laws, we let them do this and then we need to pay for the many useless unnecessary laws they create - hands off please. Let us live our own lives. Let [specific firm mentioned] run their own business as they see fit - they set a very high standard and I have no doubt some council law will wreck this ...

Keeps competitive pricing and maintains high standards of of both cab and service
keeps the element of competition alive, with superior companies able to afford to offer a corporate and luxury service, and the smaller business can charge a cheaper realistic fee for those wanting a basic service. Change to a district set tariff will degrade the service completely and cut out the individuals right to choose a presently, very excellent variety of travel opportunites.
Let the market decide!
Let the market set tariffs and service levels
[specified business] use [specific firm mentioned] for local, airport transfers and visitors. We can monitor expenditure, issuing a PO number and invoiced for each job. The cars are Mercedes or BWM, which provide the image The Company wishes to convey. Always an excellent and professional service.
Managing themselves
More competition for competative fares
More fair
My impression is that the individual operators have a cartel in place and there is no real competition, resulting in unjustifiably high fares
My opinion is mixed: If you are dealing with local fares or pick up a taxi from a rank then it is good to know the fares are capped. This surely can't apply for long-distance hire which is usually pre-booked (eg Heathrow) and therefore outside of district council jurisdiction.
Need to be realistic
Needs to be guidance only
Normally ring up in advance. Always go for the cheapest
Not a council service
Not all taxi companies offer the same service I have had bad and good service, so I want the choice. Pay peanuts you get monkeys
Not impressed by the council or the operators who are expensive
Not in S O D C
One price doesnt fit all when the quality of service and vehicles varies significantly between different firms. The customer should be allowed to decide what he wants to pay for what level of service. Choice in this regard is vital and any action that reduces consumer freedom should be considered very thoroughly indeed.
Only way to ensure you get the same rate, whichever taxi company you choose.
Operators MUST be free to set their own prices to reflect the standards for staff quality and service that they wish to maintain. For the district Council to consider setting prices is ridiculous piece of interference in free trade and can only serve to bring all standards down to those of the lowest level.
operators should be able to set their own tariff so that consumers can make their own choice considering price/quality/convenience
Operators should be free to set their own tariffs, but with a maximum set by the local authority. I think there is an expectation that this is the system that applies to hackney carriages.
Operators would over charge
Operators would want to charge as much as they can
Operators would want to charge too much
Possibly by individual operators but with the limits capped by the council?
Pre-arranged "executive services" or airport trips should be set by the operator (and drive competition between taxi providers). "Hailing" or train station pick-up jobs should operate at the same fixed fare.
Prevents price wars
Prices are too high at the moment esp for journeys outside Oxford and in the Vale. I would like a fare price scheme set by the Council
Private companies should be allowed to operate on the same basis as any other private company and set their own tariffs. The company I work for chooses to pay a higher price for a better quality of service and our provider would not be able to provide the superior service we demand if they were forced to adhere to set tariffs.
Probably better in regulating taxi companies and bringing benefits to customers.
Promotes healthy competition and business growth
provided that the tariff scheme in place in The Vale works successfully - I dont any idea of whether it does or doesnt. As a business that books a lot of airport transfers it is sometimes to our benefit to be able to negotiate a corporate rate but for standard local bookings it is helpful to know that a standard charge applies.
Providing there is no collusion or cartel between the operators to set higher than expected tariffs
[specific firm mentioned] provide a very professional service, including the quality of cars and the staff they provide. We have used them as a company for many years and they have never let us down. We are happy to pay extra for a very professional service.
Reasonable rate set
REGULATION WILL ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NO COMPETITIVE RATES. WON'T THIS AFFECT BUSINESSES AND REDUCE THE CHOICE/PRICE FOR CONSUMERS? MAYBE THE SCHEME SHOULD BE OPTIONAL TO JOIN!
saves having to shop around for deals
See how it goes and if there are complaints or difficulties review
Seems more sensible
Set a standard rate for the total area
Set by either, if attempt to get from Oxford to Abingdon it's too costly compared to bus or car parking charges
Set by individual operators to enable competative pricing but capped by district council
Set by individuals but to council guidelines.
Set price would be fair - all equal overboard
Simple market pricing should prevail. Why does the district council need to set prices? If the district council does set the tariff it will have to enforce it which will cost wasteful time and money.
So know will be charged fairly and consistently and not be surprised by a higher charge for the same journey by a different operator.
So that amaximum can be set
Some competition seems sensible.
Some kind of control needs to be maintained
Some operators charge astronomic fees for public holidays
Some seem to charge what they want.
Some taxi firms are particularly thoughtful and kind to the elderly and we are prepared to pay a small premium to ensure quality of service and helpful drivers.

Some taxi firms in South Oxfordshire (Particularly [named operator]) charge excessive tariffs, and the same journey can cost different amounts each time you travel.
Standardisation means that I know what to expect and would be more likely to use a taxi.
Standardising prices is better
Supply/ demand based on quality and price. Setting tariffs only encourages disreputable firms to under invest at the risk of health, safety and welfare of passengers.
Surely if it is set by the operators which i understand has been for years, then Market forces will determine the effect. i for one would not wantto pay less for the service I currently get. As if the fares drop then the level of service has to be affected currently good quality cars clean drivers = good service = good standards. low fares poor quality of drives and cars = poor service. I travel the country in my work and i am often in Taxis maybe 4 times per day the good companies charge more have better standards. the cheap companies seem to have older cars untidy drives and the drivers often complain that they not amking enough due to the fares being low. My point is Market Forces will always find it's level. Do Not Change what is not broken you will lose quality if you do. Look at the sweat shops in India a good example of Cheap versus quality. people will pay for quaity if the want a good service.
Surely it is up to the operator to set the tariff. It's Like SODC going into Curry's and telling them how much they can charge for a TV or Computer. Yes they can set legal & safety requirements but certainly not the tariff, maybe we should tell SODC what we are prepared to pay for the services they offer.....?
Surely it would be ridiculous if the individual operators set the tariff - prices would spiral out of control.
Surely there can be both types of tarrif setting in operation, just leave it to the operator to choose how they wish to run thier own businesses.
Tariff set by district council would massively impact on existing operators. Asking if district council should set Taxi tariff is like asking the local Taxi drivers to set council tax.
Tariffs set by individual operators encourages competition, but only if users can find out what their tariffs are. In the absence of widely available information on competing tariffs, I would prefer local authority control.
Tariffs set by the district council are unfair, and do not allow any form of competition or differentiation between the individual operators. In my experience, standards of both vehicle and service have been noticeably higher when using South Oxfordshire taxis and hackney carriages, compared to using those in the Vale of White Horse. It is important that people can make an informed decision based on the level of service that they require from an operator - some people, including myself, are happy to pay more for a decent standard of service, with a smartly attired, courteous, punctual driver. If prices are set by the district council, then all you have is non-differentiated homogeneity, and when this is the case, what purchasing criteria do you have at your disposal to base your decision on? There is no more valid reason for district councils to set the hackney carriage tariffs than there is for the same district council to set the rate at which local supermarkets sell their produce, or at which local garage forecourts sell their petrol. In short, there MUST be competition between local companies, as permitted by individual operators setting their own tariffs; else the only loser is the end consumer, the passenger.
Tariffs set by the District Council will enable large and small firms, and individual drivers to charge similar fees, not giving an advantage to any particular firm size. It also provides the public with the knowledge that the tariffs are set by a third party so fair and independent.
Taxi firms should, like any other business, be free to complete on price and the service they provide.
Taxis in and around oxford are far more expensive than elsewhere in the UK I assume this is down to it being a blanket rate, there no competition in pricing.
The council must understand that any commercial supplier must decide the service level their market demands and price their product accordingly . I can see no case for any local government involvement in this most common business practise .
The council should not be setting tariffs. It is for the market to set tariffs. Other crieria are also important - such as service levels. Customer satisfaction should drive suppliers. A minimum tariff does not incentivise poor-performing taxi firms to compete for passengers through better customer service. I frequently use taxis - hail, rank and pre-booked - and have had too many bad experiences of poor standard of taxis, poor driving and variable charges, that I only use reputable firms. I am prepared to pay for reliable quality service. I resent paying for poor quality of a licensed cab so unless the authority is also going to enforce standards (which it is not well-placed to do) then I advocate allowing the market to decide.
The district council knows nothing about running taxi companies/services ! We live in a free market economy. The taxi operators know their own business best, which includes quality cars and drivers as well as price issues: you get what you pay for. The taxi operators should be allowed to set their own tariffs.
The fare charged by a taxi should be a commercial decision for the taxi operator. I see no reason for the council to be involved. If the council ceased this activity this would help reduce council costs.
The larger taxi firms could stifle competition by flooding the taxi ranks then charging what they like thus reducing competition. It is best that the Council decides the tariff so that it does not rise too much.
The local council will destroy some really good taxi companies by introducing unnecessary tariff control. In other words, a group of Councillors tell all the taxi companies in the district how much they charge, not taking into account that different companies offer different ranges of services and quality of vehicles. The choice is still with the consumer as to who they travel with so why interfere.
The market will determine the maximum price itself, it does not need to be determined by a local authority. If a taxi firm is charging too much then they will soon lose business.
The operator will know what is the best tariff for his business and therefore can provide a quality service accordingly
The operators should be free of council control
The rates on the previous page are cheaper than those I currently pay
The standard of taxis in Didcot compared to wantage is far superior. Wantage companies are much smaller and often less reliable and less professional. Didcot has its low fare taxi services that provide a good service to town folk such as[specific firm mentioned] and [specific firm mentioned] but it also has much more professional taxi companies to meet the needs of the growing businesses in and around the area. Having used companies such as [specific firm mentioned] for business use I like having the opportunity to pay a higher fare for executive business travel when arranging transport for clients. Those companies in this market segment earn their reputation based on high quality service, luxury cars and professionalism. But it comes at a price. If you were to cap their prices- you would be capping the success and quality of taxi services we currently have available in south Oxfordshire.
The standards will remain high if the firms are competitive.
The tariff should be set by the marketplace rather than the council. Expensive operators will price themselves out of the market.
The tariff should make it clear when you get in what you pay
Then it is more competitive. When you find a company you're happy with you stick with them.
Then it would be fair

Then we all know
There are a wide variety of services available in this sector. We use a private car service to collect VIPs/ do airport runs and expect a very high standard of vehicle/ driver. We would not expect the same tariff as a 'hail in the street' taxi as we would expect a different standard of service. This isn't something that a council could reasonably be expected to legislate for.
There are all sorts of services provided by licensed hackney operators and they should be allowed to innovate and provide services on a competitive basis without being forced into a common fare structure. Doing an airport run, or driving a disabled child to school, are completely different from taking home someone after a night in the pub.
There are currently too many "ifs and buts" about taxis prices. Some operators charge early/late fees, some have meet and greet charges at airports and most charge waiting time. This can be confusing to the customer - when you pay for a taxi you want to know that the charge is fair and consistent.
There is a huge difference in standards between operators and I prefer to pay slightly more for better standard - [specific firm mentioned]
There is always the risk of an anti-competitive cartel, but by its nature the hackney carriage trade is, in my judgement, unlikely to form one. Therefore the market should ensure a fair deal for customers
There needs to be structure
There should be guidelines in place to protect users, particularly vulnerable users or those who rely on taxis for mobility (e.g. blind or partially sighted people).
They charge random prices
They deserve to - they work hard enough
They have all been fair to me 008
They need to earn their own living and not be told what to charge
They won't rip you off
think private businesses should be able to charge what they like
This keeps competition in the market. If the price is standardised, there is no incentive for a company to offer anything other than the cheapest option. Sometimes I want more than that - for instance, when I am transporting important clients I like the fact that I can use a service with nice cars, smart drivers, employed drivers - these things matter. I also choose to use that kind of service for some rare occasions when I have needed one of my young teenagers to be transported somewhere - I don't just want a "mini cab" level of service in a car that smells of smoke, with no certainty of the quality of car or driver.
This should be more easily understood by the end-users as it would be consistent and hopefully not just profit-driven
This should be set by councils, as individual operators are profit based and prices may rise. While competition with other operators should in theory keep prices stable, getting a taxi is not something one usually does fare comparison with - unlike say choosing shops to buy a product from.
This way provides competition between operators, for which the customer can select their own choice. Your choice is then down to service provided by a particular operator, prices, appearance / standard set by that operator.
this will encourage competitiveness
This will give a level playing field to operators and customers alike.
This will make the market more competitive and customers are reassured to obtain the best services.
This would allow the operator to offer a service that is commensurate with the cost of running the service at the level they wish to offer.
This would give a standard tariff which is probably fairer.
To be independent of the operators and to take account of public transport costs and availability
To be the same as neighbouring council
To control high charges
To encourage competition. If the tariff is fixed the operator has no incentive to differentiate their service in terms of quality. It is about choice, some people may choose a dirty old taxi that is cheap (but legal), another a new car with mobile chargers provided. We live in a free market economy not a control economy.
To have a fixed price by the council must be illegal. How can a council dictate to private companies what to charge. I don't think Brussels or the government would approve and neither do I
To keep charges down
To keep prices down
To make sure you don't get ripped off
To put a ceiling on what can be charged
Transparency
Uncertainty of the cost involved in taking a hackney Carriage is one of the factors which leads me to use them less frequently
Unless there is an overhaul of prices for the consumer to compare between taxi companies
We are a democracy, not a police state
We have contract arrangements as a business with a local company so competition for prices is a good thing, however having prices "capped" is also good.
We live in a democracy
When I use a taxi service I like to treat myself and my potential customers to an executive service. I strongly believe that having a fixed tariff will have a drastic effect on the quality of vehicles and possible drivers that I wish to use
When I was on work experience, some individual companies used to charge more and deliberately drive slowly.
When you book they can give you a price. Council won't tell you that.
Whichever is cheapest
Whichever is the cheapest
While it stops a price war downwards, it also stops individual upwards price hikes
While service is important price is a massive decider as well. It would be interesting to see the comparison in between the council set figures and what other companies currently charge to see how much extra you pay for service.
Whoever is more competitive
why change something that is not broken
Will be cheaper
Would be much easier to know what you're paying is the same no matter which vehicle you use and where you use it.
Would prefer operators to set tariffs to encourage competition - current fares are too high.
You need control over prices so you don't get ripped off
you need to differentiate between hackney carriage and executive cars

<p>You still have the choice of who you will use and can decide on the best most efficient and reliable one you like. It also keeps them competitive otherwise they may lose customers.</p> <p>You tell the council and they take no notice</p> <p>You would know then it would be the same charge whoever you booked</p> <p>You would then be able to chose the cheapest service</p>
<p>Q9. Vale tariff Question. 289 comments; 454 no comments</p>
<p>£4 flat rate is easier: 2 coins required. £3.50 is an awkward amount for a trip down the road, I'm sure people will just pay 4 or even a fiver. It is designed for a £1.50 tip at present.</p> <p>1 size does not fit all and competition among operation should be allowed</p> <p>A charge per complete mile seems easier to understand.</p> <p>Add guideline charges for specific desitnations e.g. Abingdon to Oxford Railway Station</p> <p>again - see no reason why this is not an open and free market with tariffs set according to competition unless this is abused in which set tariffs would be needed</p>
<p>Again, I would prefer some competition. Either way, I should like to be sure that drivers themselves are paid more when the tariff is higher.</p>
<p>Again, if taxis are part of an integrated transport policy (which I think they should be) then a more holistic approach to the management of taxis and other transport options is required. I think there should be one tariff only (there is nothing special about bank holidays, after hours etc). Charges should be reduced to encourage greater usage. I also think that blue badge holders and the elderly who are house bound should get a reduction on fares. I think a payment card solution could enable costs to be reduced. Perhaps payment card holders would get a reduced fare. This should reduce losses due to unpaid bills, reduced payment times, reduced card costs. Cards should be treated like cash but transactions should be electronic. The soiling charge should rise. The tariff card should include details about shift working. Drivers should be expected to work specific shift patterns to enable working time and other health and safety matters to be managed</p>
<p>Allow competition and let operators to lower or increase the fare based on the level of service they provide.</p> <p>Allow competition it's fairer - they companys then have someone to work towards in retaining custom</p> <p>Allow individual pricing (set price) for pre-booked trips</p>
<p>Allow operators to run as fixed tarrif if they think that is the business model that suits them best, or allow them to set their own tarrif to provide a 'upmarket' provision if they want. Both schemes have thier place in this world!, and most locals know which carriers are the best for value.</p> <p>Allow the market to decide what's the right price level</p> <p>Allowing operators to have their own tariffs should encourage competition. However, such competition will not really exist until those tariffs are widely published. In the absence of this, I would prefer local authority control.</p> <p>Allowing taxi companies to charge appropriately for different levels of service can only be good for competition and increase levels of services offered. Working on Milton Park - many businesses need professional, reliable, good quality taxi services - you pay for what you get and its good to have a choice</p> <p>Amend tariff on cyclical basis by agreement with a panel of Hackney Carriage operators to ensure fairness and consistency</p> <p>Apply consistent tariff for all operators. Will ensure you know in advance what the maximum charge will be when considering booking a taxi, or hailing one. Allows operators to discount if they choose.</p> <p>Applying a tarrif is not in the interest of fair trade & will encourage unscrupulous operators who otherwise would not be able to compete on quality</p> <p>As a local business we use local hackney companies so we negotiate our prices on the amount of business with them and this should be allowed to continue</p> <p>As above - unless I'm missing something, ridiculous.</p> <p>As before. This is a 'one size fits all' approach that does not cover all services.</p> <p>As for reasons stated previously.</p> <p>As I said before, local councils do not run taxi services and are not taxi operators. The local councils know nothing about running commercial enterprises. We live in a free market economy, and the local councils should not be interfering at all, much less setting rates. I can't speak specifically for the Vale of White Horse tariffs etc because I live in the SODC area, and use taxis between Didcot Parkway and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, and Wallingford --- mainly because the Thames Travel bus service is so inadequate, and especially in the evenings (except Friday and Saturday), but especially on Sundays.</p> <p>As I wouldn't use one in this location, I shouldn't really comment. My answer to No. applies to the Wallingford/Didcot area.</p> <p>As per my answer in the last question- free market forces to help supply meet demand. Allow operators to charge their own tariff and influence the quality of service they would like to provide.</p> <p>As per my previous answer, the pricing should be determined by the free market. It can be monitored by the council to ensure no price fixing but competition needs to be in place as well as freedom for new entrants to the market to be able to "set up" and then make a return on their investment.</p> <p>As previous</p> <p>As previous comment</p> <p>As previous comment- stimulates competition and value for money.</p> <p>As previously stated, true and fair competition can only exist if organisations can decide on their level of costs. amount of margin they wish to make and then calculate their charges accordingly.</p> <p>As stated earlier, these are private businesses and should not be regulated by the government. If this was done in the past because the businesses were practicing outside of a moral code and was charging outrageous tariffs then I might vote differently.</p> <p>Be cheaper!</p> <p>Because they are providing a service and they know their own costs. Other businesses have the opportunity to set their own prices. If there's sufficient competition, prices will be set.</p> <p>Cannot see why the council should interfere in the market.</p> <p>Charges aren't that bad</p> <p>Cheap as possible</p>

Cheaper
Cheaper
Clear and simple
Companies offering a service should not be dictated to by idiots on councils who don't know what they are talking about. Competition will set the correct fare.
Companies should be free to charge as they seem fit
Companies should make their own decisions and remain competative
Competition for service and price, if prices are set then service provide can deteriorate, which is not what the customer wants.
Competition is always healthy
competition is healthy and for busines's to survive especially small ones flexibility is paramount and restrictions just make life harder
Competition is preferred allowing choice of service and quality - just as in any other purchase of goods and services
Competition means better customer service
Creates competitive pricing which will benefit users.
Depending on the circumstances, private taxi company supplying exclusive cars should not be held to this tariff. Otherwise this could effect the level of vehicle that businesses require.
Didn't know there was one?
Don't know enough to comment but with rise in petrol prices since January 2012 maybe these prices should be increased, but would need more information to tick the second box.
Due to the rural nature of the area, in some locations customers are limited to only 1 or 2 taxi companys for use (especially where I regularly use taxis in Faringdon and Shrivenham). As such there are no market forces to regulate prices, so there should be some form of regulation and oversight to protect customers. Similarly if taxi's were to self price, then there would have to be some form of up front quote or demonstration of charging tariff. This system doesn't exist for Hackney carriage licenced taxis and so would require a fundamental change to their business process.
Each subsequent 1/10 mile increased by 10%
Each tenth of a mile should be reduced to 15p, £2 a mile is too much!!
Ensure the tariffs regularly reflect changes in fuel costs
Everyone in the area is aware of the rates before booking
Fares are excessive. Basic £3.50 charge should be reduced, and operators should be able to compete.
Fares for taxis booked in Botley should be in line with those in Oxford city. This makes more sense than parity of fares in Botley and Abingdon.
Fares should be negotiated in advance with the customer
For operators to decide on
For reasons above, it would encourage competition and better standard taxis
For SODC and VWH to adopt the seemingly efficient tariff already in operation in one seems sensible.
For the same reasons as before, I think the quality of service and car would be better if operators were allowed to set their own tariffs but perhaps with a set of guidelines for their charges
Free market
Free market conditions should mean lower prices and better services.
free market works best
Give customers A choice, don't we live in a free market?
Give the option to the taxi operators to set their own tariffs. If the operators want to be competitive then they will ensure good price. Plus good service will be provided
Have a discrecional charge for OAPS and Under 18s
Having used taxi a lot recently I fnd them very expensive for example the centre of town to peachcroft a matter of 10 mins costs 10 Pounds. Peachcroft to Radley Station is 4.70 which takes 4 - 5 mins.
However, tarrifs must be publicised so you know beforehand the likely charge. There should perhaps be a recommended maximum set by the council but taxi companies can charge as they wish provided they inform the customer beforehand whether their rate is higher or lower thereby giving the taxi company the opportunity to explain. Hailed taxis should should be limited to a maximum.
I agree with the Vale setting the tariff as they will be independent from the taxi firm
I am happy as they are
I am not bothered on this point as I use who I wish and I would not get into some of the taxis i see on the road Quailty counts keep it that way.
I can't imagine I would use a taxi in this area and other reasons explained previously, but if I were to would suggest remove tariff.
I do not believe that competition will reduce fares.
I do not live in the Vale
I don't think the council has any place interfering in local businesses and dictating prices. Where is the competition in that? They don't control local rents or costs of hairdressers/plumbers, so why taxi costs? Also, by actively controlling them they have to actively monitor them - which introduces cost and admin into the equation. Cut council costs and stop managing something which does not need managing.
I don't think they are too expensive
I don't use cabs but my customers do
I don't use taxis in Vale of White horse area
I don't use Vale taxis but I don't believe it encourages healthy competition.
I don't want to compromise on quality or service, hence I would like to choose by paying the tariff I prefer.
I don't wish to pass comment on an area I am not currently resident in
I feel the tarrif should be kept, but reduced to be honest. I live in Chilton and have had ridiclous quotes (£25) for fares from taxis at the rank in Wantage to travel to Chilton which has meant with the cost of a baby sitter thrown in myself and my husband can't go out for a meal. Also the taxi fares in the vale and south oxfordshire are the most expensive in the country.
I have always paid £4 minimum fare, the drivers have to make a living, with the price of fuel I think this tariff is out of date.
I have little idea why councillors should be setting tariffs in a business they probably know little about
I have nothing to benchmark against.
i live in south oxon so its not my place to comment on the Vale of white horse. i see the benefit of people knowing upfront what they will be paying. However, premium services (eg [specific firm mentioned] cars) on prebookings need to be allowed to operate outside this system.
I only use taxi's for airport trips.... never for local metered journeys

I prefer to be able to choose a quality firm at a slightly higher price if I want
I see nothing wrong with it and it works
I think a fixed tariff will limit the offerings available, a free market would ensure competitiveness and will allow differentiation, both key to ensuring sustainability of that market.
I think it looks fairly reasonable
I think Operators should be consulted but never allowed to have the final say.
I think that if having the tariff works in the area keep it as that is what the users are used to and change for changes sake upsets people and could have a knock on effect on the trade. However if more competition is wanted/needed the tariff should be removed to encourage this.
I think that the charge for Distance a) and the charge for b) first seven tenths of a mile are very high. This charge is similar to London charges and oftn distances travelled can be quite short. I.e. centre of Oxford to Botley, the total charge of £7 - £8 is too high and half of this is for the first 10th of a mile
I think that they are at a reasonable price
I think the charges are reasonable
I think the prices charged on special days such as Xmas and New Year are extremely high. We were quoted £ 100+ for Oxford to Abingdon or Abingdon to Oxford single journeys. Its a rip off and I am sure companies in Oxford lose out as people just dont go.
I think there should be a differential between a bespoke chauffeur driven service and a taxi rank or hailing from the street service.
I think there should be a free market and those should be able to set the rates the taxi companies wish. Price is not always the most relevant criterion when booking a taxi as you tend to use those companies that you trust and are punctual
I think there should be one tariff for any time
I think we would be best served if taxi companies can compete freely on price and service
I think you need to also gather feed back from the taxi drivers themselves.
I think the distances should be extended because the above tarrif means that a short journey of just a few miles is nearly ten pounds. Very expensive!
I thought that there was supposed to be competition between companies, so that people have more choice, but if the tariff is already set everybody ends up paying the same price.
I understand. From talking to taxi drivers that the smaller firms would prefer to retain the tariff. I have been told that a certain very large taxi firm wants to end the tariff, so that it can dominate market and charge what it wants. They have been busy collecting licences and increasing the number of cars they have operating in the area. Their aim is to fill the taxi ranks with their own cars, exclude other smaller firms, and hike up the prices.
I use taxi's in Didcot, Wallingford and Wantage. The quality of the cars, staff and reliability of service in SODC is much higher than that of VoWHDC. Most of the providers around Watage are one man operations. This means that the customer have to phone several operators to find a cab during busy periods and they are often late or do not turn up at all. This is very different to the likes of [specific firm mentioned] or [specific firm mentioned] who when phoned, sort it out and are reliable.
I want a fixed tariff in a given area so that I don't get any too-unpleasant surprises when it is time to pay, I don't mind if changes are made, but have no particular changes in mind at present
I would like to see some firms offer a higher quality of service - Abingdon firms all seem the same - and would be prepared to pay more for it
If it is currently working then no need to change - have not used Vale services so cannot comment on levels of service
If it was cheaper I'd ask them at the time
If its competitive
If people would like a executive car they could book this and would be more than happy to pay the difference in price (I would pay the difference to get an executive car and well dressed driver). Some of the taxi's are older vehicles and drivers in jeans, shorts, t-shirts etc do not meet the requirement of chauffeur cars that I would need to book for my company or use myself
If removing the tariff would result in reduction in fares due to greater competition then this would be my preference. I realise that the council tariff is a maximum, but I imagine this is actually applied as a standard charge by operators.
If taxi companies feel that the market will pay more then they should be able to. I don't mind paying a bit more for a better service/better vehicles and better trained drivers. I don't believe operators will charge more than the market can afford as there is plenty of competition and if prices go up too much people will go elsewhere
If the are honest. Negotiate the fare in advance
If there is no tariff companies will lower prices in an effort to undercut one another. Some companies will charge more, but they can only command more if they are providing a better service
If this system has worked in the past then I don't really have a problem with it staying the same.If it was brought in because some operators were charging unreasonable amounts then it could stay. Usually the market sets the price for these sorts of things and having set prices eliminates competition.
In line with south oxon present policy
Include maximums for hidden charges such as additional costs for collecting from more than one address and meet and greet. The cost should reflect fairness and consistency across the board
Individual journey prices should be negotiated in advance. Honesty is important
Individual providers should be allowed to compete and set their own prices so customers can have a choice of who they wish to use.
Introduce healthy competition. I recently stayed in Liverpool and their taxis were at least a third less.
It helps to have a universal taxi tariff through the region so that you roughly know what price you are paying for a certian journey
it is best for taxi users if taxi companies can compete freely on price and service
It is best for taxi users if taxi companies can compete freely on price and service.
It is better to have a set rate in advance
It looks fine
It looks fine
It looks quite pricey
It looks quite reasonable
It looks quite reasonable
It might seem that tariffs keep prices down, but there is no guarantee of this. The price of bread in the supermarket is set by supply and demand. No-one suggests the council should get involved in setting maximum bread prices to prevent consumers being ripped off. If cab companies rip off their customers they will get competed out of business
It seems somewhat complicated - possible to simplify?

It should be cheaper
It should be in the best interests of all if we have competitive rates of independant hackney carriage providers, combined with quality of drivers and vehicles. Healthy competition means the best (not just the cheapest companies) will win out.
It should be measured in whole miles
It should be set by drivers
It should be set by operators 047
It should be up to the operators
It would allow operators to offer a higher quality to service.
It's too expensive for a start. The whole taxi service industry ([specific firm mentioned] inclusive) need to review their tariffs and revise them downwards. Fuel cannot be used as the excuse for increased tariffs.
it's too high as it is!
It's very reasonable.
Keep existing and let guys determine
Keep the tariff but the signage is unclear of baggage, additional people, and sharing a lift. Fixed mile charge + min fee, i.e. make it simple to calculate.
Keep the tariffs the same in both districts, allow the Taxi companies to decide on tariffs to services this helps healthy competition and allows customers like me te freedom of choice
Keeps it simple and easy to follow. Maybe should be made easier to find the tariff
leads to a bad standard of taxis
Leave operators to set the tariff
Let firms set their own rates - competition is good.
Let free market competition flow
Let individual firms set their own rates - as long as they are publicised. There could perhaps be a maximum allowed amount per mile.
let the market decide
Let the market decide the price. But the taxi must display their charges
Let the market decide.
Let the market decide. Councils are out of touch.
Let the taxi co decide please, the peopel are smart enough - u can ask the fee before u take the cab and then take a different oen if u think it is too expensive - why muct the council seek to drive service to the lowest possible level
let the taxi firm to set the tariff
Let the taxi firms compete!
Licenced taxi firms should be allowed flexibility in the prices they charge so that they can differentiate between their competitors e.g. better cars, extra services etc. So any tarrif provided by a local council should be able to be used for guidance only and if the taxi firm chooses to charge over the tarrif rates, they should sink or swim on the service they provide. That said, taxi firms should clearly display their individual tarrifs (in cars, on web-sites etc.) so the customer knows what charges they can expect from that individual company. In my experience most customers choose firms not just on price but take other elements into account such as: - Whether the cab arrives on time. - Whether the driver was helpful. - What the condition of the car was. - Whether they felt safe during their journey (particularly relevant to women travelling alone). Companies should be able to differentiate on this basis, if they are forced to stick to a set tarrif other services are likely to suffer.
Like i said before, change all companies from south and vale to the same tariffs. Think about a good stable and atmosphere between all drivers and companies.
[specific firm business]use [specific firm mentioned] Didcot for local, airport transfers and visitors. We can monitor expenditure, issuing a PO number and invoiced for each job. The cars are Mercedes or BWM, which provide the image The Company wishes to convey. Always an excellent and professional service.
Looks a sensible arrangement in force already
looks fine
Looks quite fair
Lower prices
lower the 7 tenths of a mile charge, it is a bit excessive
Lower the tariff
Make charges a bit lower
Make it cheaper
Make it cheaper its too expensive!
Make it table of recommended (not maximum) fares
Market forces should prevail. If the costs are unreasonable users will not pay.
Maximum Tariff should be set by District Council with automatic annual increase inline with inflation index
Maybe hold the meter if journey time is excessive
might get some firms cheaper some more expensive rather they all charge the same fair more simple les hassle phoning around finding who charges what..
Needs to be cheaper
No . As above let the business set the prices for their level of service . Many business users in the area demand more than a cheap taxi can provide . Any involvement in setting rates will lower standards for business users .
No idea what the tariffs are. County council should have a watching brief
No rogue businesses. Know how much it will cost before you start
Not a heavy user of that area's taxi. More SODC area.
not likely to take a taxi in the Vale of White Horse, so don't really care what they do
Not necessarily with changes, but Council should review charges every one or two years to ensure that Taxi owners can continue to earn a reasonable income.
Often can't get taxis in the Vale after midnight and have to call companies from SODC area as it's not worth the vale taxis working after midnight apart from weekends.
Once again, it is always preferred that there be no tax or tariff. The less tariff or tax taken from the local community, the more capital the consumer has to spend on other items.

<p>One only has to compare the standards of service offered by SODC licensed operators compared to the VOWH. The VOWH has taxi ranks full of old unattractive vehicles with really appalling names such as '[specific firm mentioned]', mostly unkempt and malodorous.</p>
<p>open competition between operators to encourage better service and value operator to set tariff</p>
<p>operators should be able to set their own tariffs so that consumers can make their own choice in relation to price/quality/convenience</p>
<p>Operators should be free of council control and are better able to set the tariff.</p>
<p>Operators to clearly display their own tariffs.</p>
<p>Other operators in Oxfordshire maintain very good service without the imposed tariff</p>
<p>Over priced for distances</p>
<p>People would know what to expect</p>
<p>Perhaps allow operators meeting certain minimum standards to be allowed to set their own tariff</p>
<p>Perhaps let the operators have more flexibility to quote and compete for longer journey bookings e.g. Abingdon to Heathrow</p>
<p>Please make it clear at taxi ranks what the charges are - at the moment you don't know until you are in the cab.</p>
<p>Prefer competitive market</p>
<p>Prefer consistent charging</p>
<p>Prices are within reason</p>
<p>Prices seem very high in this area compared to the rest of the UK</p>
<p>Remove the tariff and encourage diversity of operators improving quality and availability.</p>
<p>Remove the tariff. Allow the consumers to choose the level and types of service they wish to use. Fixed tariffs could drastically effect the quality of vehicles and staff for corporate and executive use. I think companies should be able to compete freely on quality and service.</p>
<p>Review each year</p>
<p>Same again</p>
<p>same answer as before</p>
<p>Same thoughts as previous question: I feel that if I wish to pay a slightly higher premium for a nicer, more luxurious car with higher quality service, then that is my choice. If I want to pay a cheaper rate with Joe Bloggs then that option is available too. I feel that if the district council set the tariffs then the high end taxi services will lose money and not be able to continue to provide such a high service. It also means that if the district council sets a tariff somewhere inbetween the two current tariffs, the lower end taxis don't have any incentive to maintain their cars when they are getting a slightly higher rate than what they were previously getting.</p>
<p>SEE ANSWERS ON PREVIOUS QUESTION.</p>
<p>See comment to previous question.</p>
<p>see earlier comment</p>
<p>See my comments for question 5, the same principles can be applied here.</p>
<p>See my previous comments</p>
<p>See my previous comments.</p>
<p>see previous answer. Users can make their own choices</p>
<p>see previous comment</p>
<p>See previous comment; removal or status quo both have advantages and disadvantages.</p>
<p>see previous question comments</p>
<p>seems a fair and reasonable tariff</p>
<p>seems a fair price.</p>
<p>Seems reasonable.</p>
<p>Seems v expensive for short distances. Maybe a 2 or 3 tier charging system?</p>
<p>Service quality is the key concern for me and I want operators to be able to compete on the basis of service quality and price, not be restricted in the quality of service they can offer.</p>
<p>Set by individual operators to enable competitive pricing but capped by district council</p>
<p>Set by individuals 026</p>
<p>Set by operators. Free market competition</p>
<p>Setting a tariff by the council will reduce competition and maybe fix prices at a high base</p>
<p>Setting a tariff would effect certain taxi companies being able to provide what I need, reliability, standards of cars, professional drivers.</p>
<p>Setting the tariff kills off any competition.</p>
<p>Should be a different tariff for longer journeys: for instance over 5miles, 10-20 miles etc</p>
<p>Should be a free market</p>
<p>Should be cheaper</p>
<p>Should be consistency of fees regardless of which taxi you get into - having operators set their own fees will cause upset at taxi ranks - you get in the first taxi normally - rule of the rank? but if different operators charge different fees then you could end up in a taxi charging much more than the one behind - or you could have waited for a cheaper one to turn up having the fees set by the district ensures a clarity in the service</p>
<p>Should be lowered per seven tenths and per one tenths.</p>
<p>Should be supply and demand based, competition brings down prices. Why would council set it (unless current fares are too high)?</p>
<p>should be the responsibility of the supplier to fix their rates</p>
<p>Should have same tariff in all districts</p>
<p>Simplifying the wording would be helpful.</p>
<p>Slightly lower tariff</p>
<p>So it is set by individual operators</p>
<p>Stifles competition</p>

<p>Tariffs set by the district council are unfair, and do not allow any form of competition or differentiation between the individual operators. In my experience, standards of both vehicle and service have been significantly higher when using South Oxfordshire taxis and hackney carriages, compared to using those in the Vale of White Horse. It is important that people can make an informed decision based on the level of service that they require from an operator - some people, including myself, are happy to pay more for a decent standard of service, with a smartly attired, courteous, punctual driver. If prices are set by the district council, then all you have is non-differentiated homogeneity, and when this is the case, what purchasing criteria do you have at your disposal to base your decision on? There is no more valid reason for district councils to set the hackney carriage tariffs than there is for the same district council to set the rate at which local supermarkets sell their produce, or at which local garage forecourts sell their petrol. In short, there MUST be competition between local companies, as permitted by individual operators setting their own tariffs; else the only loser is the end consumer, the fare-paying passenger.</p>
<p>Tariffs should be set by individual operators to retain competition and diversity.</p>
<p>Tariffs to be set by individual operators. It promotes competition and improve services.</p>
<p>Taxi companies should be competitive and set their own charges.</p>
<p>Taxi prices should be regulated in the users favour although consideration of vehicle mileage costs must be taken into account for the Taxi</p>
<p>Taxis in the Vale are among the most expensive anywhere in England. The price of an evening journey - say after a night out in Abingdon to Faringdon - comes out at some £80 for 15 miles. This is incredibly expensive and completely discourages people living in outlying areas from visiting larger towns. I once paid over £50 from Witney to Faringdon. A council-set maximum means all prices rise to this level.</p>
<p>The buttons on this question don't seem to work. I prefer for the tariff to be removed.</p>
<p>The charges don't look too bad</p>
<p>The charges need to come down, there is no justification for such high prices. A 4.5mile journey, lasting 12 minutes from Didcot Station to my home costs £14.</p>
<p>The Council has no place in setting prices in a free market. Value for money is best achieved by having open competition. Council please note - value for money doesn't mean the lowest price, quality is a big factor which and the Council seem to be working hard to stifle competition and drag down quality to the lowest common denominator</p>
<p>The council should be able to set the tariff but allow the taxi companies to be able to make a profit without charging too much.</p>
<p>The fare should be obvious before departure 040</p>
<p>The operator will know what is the best tariff for his business and therefore can provide a quality service accordingly</p>
<p>The set tariff doesn't allow for high end services to cover their overheads so it effectively restricts the quality of service available.</p>
<p>The set tariff seems a fair system and doesn't need changing.</p>
<p>The setting of a central tariff reduces market competitiveness. It should not be an area where the Council spends scarce resources; they should focus on their own required obligations.</p>
<p>The tariff charged at present is value for money and in this economic climate reflects the going rate.</p>
<p>The tariff seems fair.</p>
<p>The tariff should be increased to reflect the increase in costs since 1-1-12.</p>
<p>The tariff should be set as a result of free market competition so as to improve quality of service.</p>
<p>the two boroughs work well together to hone their costs and processes. it is obvious the individual operator tariffs work well in South Oxon. I believe White horse would serve the taxi operators better and the public if they fall in with the present policy in S Oxon. From a health and safety point of view all taxis operators will have the choice to afford to offer safe, reliable cars, replaced regularly, ensuring state of the art for fuel economy, safety, etc, will be maintained over time. Currently anyone can see that the range of services offered in South Oxon is twice as varied across the board, as it is over the boundary in White Horse Vale. It is a no brainer, frankly.</p>
<p>The waiting time charge should be reduced.</p>
<p>Then it would be fair and equal. Fuel prices to be considered too.</p>
<p>There is always the risk of an anti-competitive cartel, but by its nature the hackney carriage trade is, in my judgement, unlikely to form one. Therefore the market should ensure a fair deal for customers</p>
<p>There is no additional cost to the operator on public holidays that would not be incurred for Sundays where a lower rate applied so it is unfair to operate a different tariff for these days.</p>
<p>There should be agreement between all providers to agree a tariff</p>
<p>There should be something in place to stop companies charging over the odds but maybe it should be adjusted so all companies can deliver their service within the set tariff.</p>
<p>These are private companies and therefore should be able to their businesses as they see fit.</p>
<p>these prices are reasonable, and should not be changed</p>
<p>they should encourage service providers to set their own rates based on the service they provide</p>
<p>They should only set maximums</p>
<p>This scheme sets a maximum fare, you will not be surprised at the end of your journey.</p>
<p>This would bring the two councils in line with current SODC thinking. You will see a big rise in variety of service providers within the Vale, giving rise to better quality of service provider being able to expand from being a smaller company which are currently being kept artificially of poor quality because they cannot afford to invest in newer, safer and greener technology vehicles, or extra vehicles. It makes sense for Vale of White Horse to follow the far sighted policy of the SODC, of which I absolutely applaud.</p>
<p>To understand my views please see above.</p>
<p>Too expensive</p>
<p>Unless the operators collude to set higher charges then they are best placed to set the tariff, taking account the type of vehicle they use, fuel costs and any change in minimum wage</p>
<p>Whichever is cheaper</p>
<p>Will bring healthy business competition and growth</p>
<p>With regular reviews</p>
<p>Would be nice if they were cheaper</p>
<p>Would encourage more competition and subsequently better service</p>
<p>Would prefer tariffs set by operators to encourage competition</p>
<p>Yes if this is a fair tariff</p>
<p>Yes with occasional reviews</p>
<p>You can then shop around</p>

You could make the distances more clear, or use another calculator as the passenger us penilised when the council is doing roadworks, or they put in chicane roads, or there are accidents. Should the passenger really be paying a cost for a journey made longer for something that is out of their control? It also encourages taxi's to use indirect routes to charge more. Even as a local resident, approx. 50% of taxi's I take do not take the easiest or most direct routes, but suddenly introduce lots of side streets or extra traffic. I complain every time, when I know many don't, and what is the point, I only get told its too late / pay the meter charge or I'll call the police etc etc.

You pay for what you get and some people particularly the elderly need more help and support and more dependent on reliability.

Q13: Other uses of HCVs - 171 comments: 49 no comments

After a train journey
Airport
Airport
Airport
Airport
Airport
Airport
Airport
airport
airport
Airport - business and lesure
airport and other work related trips
Airport Journeys
Airport pick up/drop off
Airport run
Airport Run x 4 times a month
airport runs
Airport runs to and from
airport runs, train station runs
Airport transfer
Airport transfer
airport transfer
Airport transfers
airport transfers
Airport transfers
airport transfers
airport transfers for customers
airport transfers, hotel transfers, corporate business
Airport trips
Airport trips
airport, usually heathrow
Airports
Airports
Airports
book for work colleagues travelling from other offices
Booking business travel
booking for company visitors
Booking on behalf of colleagues
Business
Business
Business
Business
Business Clients
Business for customers
Business for employees and visitors to our premises
Business meetings
Business meetings in the area
Business purposes (transporting overseas visitors)
Business related travel
Business travel
Business travel for visitors
Business trips
business use
Business use for visitors
Business visits
car broken down!
collecting car from garage, collecting daughter when i've had a drink
collecting my classic car from the garage

coming home from the train station in oxford
Company bookings for visitors to business in Abingdon
corporate travel
Corporate travel to and from airports and other parts of the country.
corporate travel to and from Airports throughout southern england
Culham-Heathrow / Culham-Didcot for holidays 1/yr
Does "leisure" mean taxis to the station, airport or port?
Emergencies
Events & Functions
ferry to/from airport
For an emergency including weather
For business use
For traveling to and from the train station
for work
For work colleagues
For Work purposes/meetings
Frequent use to go to the London Airports
from didcot station
From Didcot station after business meeting in London
From home to LHR and back every week
from local area to Airports
Getting children to and from school & also going to airport
getting home after a night out and I cant be bothered to walk
Going to and from Didcot Parkway
Going to church
Going to the airport
going to the train station
goto train station or airport
Heathrow airport, train stations etc.
Holiday to airports
Holiday
Holiday
holiday trip to station
Holidays and emergencies
Home to airport
I book chauffeur cars for the company that I work for
I book on behalf of my company
I book taxi's for Business Users
I book taxis for visitors to my place of work and for employees travelling on company business
I book taxis on behalf of my company travelling back and forth to the airports and ports
I do not book them for my use but in a professional capacity for business trips
I haven't used one for years, but if I were to it would be for leisure.
I organise taxis for business trips
I use as and when required
If returning to Oxford very late by coach or train
journeys for employees and visitors
Out of hours business travel
Picking up from train station
picking up visitors from airports
Please note I book up for other people for work
rail and bus stations
Railway Station, Business entertainment
special occasion or airport
special trips
Station
Station
Station/airport/London
Taking son to hospital
Tavel to and from Heathrow
To & from railway station
To airport/railway station when unable to take bus or train
To and fro for airports, especially Heathrow.
To and from a railwat station
to and from airport or rail station for work and liesure
To and from airports
To and from airports.
to and from day centre
To and from Heathrow
To and from Heathrow airport and to and from Didcot Station
to and from train station
to and from train station
to aoirport /london
to bus station
to collect business customers for ease of appointments

To Didcot Station
to get bus to oxford for airport
To get home late at night
To get to airports
To get to station
To get to train or bus station with luggage
to go to Civic functions
To go to Oxford Bus Station
to Ox park & ride when going on holiday
to the airport or station
To the train station
To train station at times when buses do not run
to transfer to final destination when using train
To/ from Didcot station
Train station
Train Station
Train/coach station to home after long journeys/holiday
Transporting my children to/from activities without me
transporting work staff and visitors
Travel
Travel for visiting colleagues or personally to/from airports.
Travel to airport or station to go on holiday
Travel to Airports
travel to and from airports
Travel to or from heathrow
Travelling to and from my home to Didcot Parkway station
Travelling to/from the vet!
trips to stations(bus/train) for work/non-work typically.
Use [specific firm mentioned] from Heathrow to Abingdon and hotel to office while in Abingdon I live in Houston, TX, USA. The service in Texas, USA pails in comparison to the service [specific firm mentioned] provide. I have used [specific firm mentioned] for the past 25 years and will continue to use them.
use taxis for staff business trips
Visitors to the company I work at
We are a business that regularly use taxis to get staff to and from airports, stations and the office to client offices/hotels
When a walk is curtailed by the weather!
when going on holiday
When i am stuck and need a lift
Work - airport runs
Work reasons
Work related events
work related journeys, e.g. to train station or airport

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Council Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Chief Executive

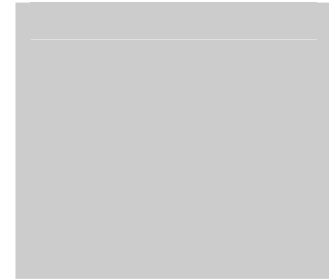
Author: David Buckle

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To: Council

Date: 18 July 2013



Community Governance Review – Draft Terms of Reference

Recommendations

1. to approve the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix A for a community governance review of South Oxfordshire
2. to establish a working group to oversee the review and determine its make-up

Purpose of report

1. To set out terms of reference for a community governance review – a review of parish arrangements within the district.

Background

2. Local authorities (in the case of two-tier areas, district councils) have had powers to review parish arrangements for many years. Until 2007, any proposals for change resulting from such reviews had to go to the relevant secretary of state for approval. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007Act) changed that and gave full powers to local authorities to implement proposals without reference to central government (although see paragraph 14 below). The Act created the title of community governance reviews (CGR) to cover such activity.
3. In 2010, the government published guidance on CGRs and I have used this guidance to shape the proposals to council. The guidance is available as a background paper if required and is easily accessible on the internet.
4. There is no duty on the council to carry out a CGR unless it is petitioned to do so, which is not the case here. Rather, it is a permissive power. The guidance offers the following pieces of advice on what might trigger a CGR:

it can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or local new issues

over time communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. In such circumstances, the council should consider undertaking a community governance review

councils should exercise their discretion, but it would be good practice to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years

5. I am unclear when, if ever, the council last undertook a comprehensive CGR of the district. There has certainly not been one for at least 15 years, in which time there have been many population changes and new housing developments. I am also aware of the proposals in the Local Plan Part One that allocate land for the expansion of Didcot and Wallingford beyond their current parish boundaries.
6. Councillors will also be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has just completed a review of our own electoral arrangements, resulting in a very different warding pattern for the district than previously. In some cases, its proposals create wards that straddle parish boundaries.
7. Finally, we have received a few ad hoc requests from parish councils for reviews over the last couple of years, which we have not yet progressed.
8. For all the reasons above, I consider that it is timely to undertake a district wide CGR.

Terms of reference

9. The 2007 Act requires the council to publish terms of reference for the review, which must specify the area under review. I propose that this is the whole of South Oxfordshire district.
10. I have looked at different models for terms of reference and prefer those that are specific about what the review will cover. For that reason, I wrote to all parish and town councils in April inviting them to advise us of any proposals that they would like to see included. The draft terms of reference that I am now inviting council to agree, set out in appendix A, include all the requests that we received. Inclusion in the draft terms of reference does not necessarily imply support; it simply indicates that we will consider the requested change. Council will note that some of the proposals are mutually incompatible.
11. The Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils has written asking that the council includes consideration of amalgamating very small parish councils and parish meetings with an appropriate neighbouring council within the terms of reference. This is likely to be contentious and I propose that we do not do so at this stage. Rather, I suggest that we seek views specifically on this issue when we consult on the draft terms of reference, so that council can decide whether it wishes to include such a clause when it finalises the terms of reference in October.

12. If council agrees the draft terms of reference we will then commence a formal consultation that will provide the opportunity for organisations/individuals to, amongst other things:
- offer support for including a particular proposal in the terms of reference
 - set out reasons why they consider we should not consider a particular proposal
 - add further proposals to the list
13. Council will receive a report in October setting out the response to the consultation and inviting it to finalise the terms of reference. By that stage it may also wish to add additional items for review that have not come forward directly from parish councils.

Relationship with the electoral review of the district council

14. In most respects, the council has free hand to make amendments to parish arrangements. However, where the LGBCE established such arrangements as part of periodic electoral reviews within the previous five years, we must get its approval first. In South Oxfordshire this not only includes the recent review of district electoral arrangements but also that of the county council completed in 2012. At this stage I cannot predict whether we will need LGBCE prior approval for any changes, but council should be aware of the possibility.
15. The 2007 Act allows the council to request the LGBCE to make consequential amendments to district ward boundaries to ensure co-terminosity with any new parish boundaries. The LGBCE is under no obligation to agree such requests and will consider each on its merits. It is, however, helpful to bear this opportunity in mind when determining any changes to parish boundaries. The nature and extent of any requests will be a matter for council to determine at the end of the CGR.

Timetable and process for the review

16. The terms of reference include a timetable for the review. The 2007 Act requires that the council completes the review within 12 months of commencement (which will be when it agrees the final terms of reference in October). The timetable easily meets this requirement.
17. All decisions fall to full council. To assist with management of the process, I recommend that council establishes a working group that can consider detailed issues prior to them coming back for decision. If council wanted to achieve political balance then the group could comprise six, made up of four Conservatives and two drawn from the minority groups. As there is no requirement for political balance on a working group, however, council has a free hand to determine a different make-up if it wishes.
18. When considering nominations to a working group, group leaders will need to bear in mind potential conflicts of interest. Councillors who are also members of town or parish councils that are proposing changes will almost certainly have a declarable interest in that particular proposal. If these become key areas for debate, they may find that this constrains their contribution to the overall work of the group.

Risks and options

19. The council has the option not to proceed with the review. For the reasons set out in paragraph four, however, I consider that there are sound reasons for carrying out a CGR at this time. The main risk is that we do not complete the CGR within the prescribed 12 month period. The timetable shows the work taking six months from formal commencement, so there is ample provision for slippage should issues take longer than expected to resolve.

Legal Implications

20. These are covered in the main body of the report

Financial Implications

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from the decision to undertake a CGR. If the council decides to make changes in due course this will involve making legal orders, producing high quality maps to show new boundaries and adjusting council tax records. We may externalise some or all of this work but will meet these costs from within existing budgets.

Conclusion

22. There is a window of opportunity to carry out a CGR prior to the next parish council elections in 2015. It has been many years since the council undertook a comprehensive review of parish arrangements and the guidance published last year suggests that one now is timely. We have sought requests from parish and town councils for changes that they would like and have reflected these in the draft terms of reference.

Background Papers

Guidance on community governance reviews – joint publication of CLG and LGBCE
Letter from chief executive to town and parish councils – April 2013
Responses from individual parish and town councils to April 2013 letter

South Oxfordshire District Council

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The Council proposes to undertake a community governance review (CGR) pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 of the whole of the district of South Oxfordshire. The 2007 Act vested powers with the council to undertake such a review.

The Council will undertake the review in accordance with the Guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in April 2008 (“the guidance”).

Currently, the council proposes to consider the following parish matters:

Parish/Area	Matters to be considered
Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe	Creating a single parish council to cover both parishes
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	Moving land east of the Wallingford by-pass (but not bounded by the by-pass) into Wallingford parish
Didcot	Amending the boundary of the parish to incorporate that part of the Millbrook estate that is currently in East Hagbourne parish and parcels of land allocated for housing in Long Wittenham and West Hagbourne parishes
East Hagbourne	Creating a single ward parish
Goring	Reducing the number of parish councillors to 10 and renaming the parish Goring-on-Thames
Harpsden	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land south of Rotherfield Road, currently in Henley-on-Thames parish
Henley-on-Thames	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land north of Gillott’s Lane and land south of Greys Road,

	both areas currently in Harpsden parish
Rotherfield Peppard	Amending the boundary of the parish to include a triangle of land bounded by Peppard Road, Widmore Lane and Blounts Court Road, currently in Sonning Common Parish
Shiplake	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land south of Bolney Lane and land north of Woodland Road, both areas currently in Harpsden parish
Sonning Common	Amending the boundary of the parish to include Chiltern Edge school, currently in Kidmore End parish; reviewing the boundary with Rotherfield Peppard parish along Shiplake Bottom and Blounts Court Road; and making a minor adjustment to the boundary with Kidmore End and Eye and Dunsden parishes at the junction of Kennylands Road and Peppard Road. Revising upwards the number of parish councillors
Wallingford	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land bounded by the Wallingford by-pass, currently in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Cholsey parishes Moving land west of the by-pass along Hithercroft into either Brightwell-cum-Sotwell or Cholsey parish
West Hagbourne	Moving land forming part of the Great Western Park development (but not including the buffer zone) into Didcot parish
Wheatley	Amending the northern boundary of the parish to align with the A40, incorporating land currently in Holton parish
Whole district	Any other matters that the council considers warrant a review

The Council received requests to review all of the above matters in response to a letter sent to parish and town councils in April 2013.

That letter set out the items the review could cover as follows:

- altering the boundaries of a parish
- creating a new parish
- merging two or more parishes
- warding or de-warding a parish

- changing a parish name
- dissolving a parish council
- changing the number of councillors who sit on a parish council (the law states that the minimum number is five)
- grouping parishes under a common parish council

The letter also set out the factors that the council would take into account in making decisions:

- natural or man-made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another
- housing developments that straddle parish boundaries, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours
- effective representation of local residents at parish level
- the LGBCE's proposals for the warding of South Oxfordshire for the purposes of district council elections
- the newly created county council electoral divisions
- views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected

The council now proposes to add one further item to this list:

- the extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community

The council will decide the final list of matters for inclusion in the CGR once it has formally consulted on these draft terms of reference.

Why is the Council undertaking the review?

The guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils (in this context that means this council) to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. It is now more than 15 years since a district wide review took place. The LGBCE has also recently completed a review of district warding arrangements, which has resulted in widespread changes some of which cut across existing parish boundaries. For these reasons the council considers it timely to carry out a CGR now, in time for implementation of any changes at the next scheduled parish council elections in 2015.

Consultation

The council is publishing these terms of reference in draft and seeking comments from interested parties by 30 September. It will then consider a report detailing responses and finalise the terms of reference at its meeting on 24 October.

Once it has finalised the terms of reference the council will make them available widely, including through circulation to parish and town councils and via its website. Where proposals involve moving properties from one parish to

another, the council will pay particular attention to making affected residents of such properties aware of the proposals and given them the opportunity to comment before it takes any decisions.

When the council publishes the terms of reference it will also publish the approximate number of properties and the electorate directly affected by proposals to change parish boundaries. It will do this for both 2013 and 2018, the latter figure based on known housing developments and their likely implementation dates.

TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

The 2007 Act requires that a principal council must complete a CGR within 12 months of the date of publication of terms of reference. The proposed timetable below complies with the legal requirement.

Action	Timetable
Council considers responses to consultation and agrees final terms of reference	24 October 2013
Terms of reference published and consultation commences	1 November 2013
Initial consultation closes	31 January 2014
Council agrees draft proposals for consultation	20 February 2014
Further consultation closes	4 April 2014
Council agrees changes	24 April 2014

How to respond

Please submit any comments on these draft terms of reference via email to cgr@southandvale.gov.uk. The council does not require a hard copy of any submission. For those without access to email please send any submission to:

CGR
 Legal and Democratic Services
 South Oxfordshire District Council
 Benson Lane
 Crowmarsh Gifford
 Wallingford
 OX10 8QS

The council is particularly interested to hear comments on the following:

Are the factors that the council will take into account when coming to decisions the right ones? Are there others that it should add?

Should the council decline to consider any of the parish matters included in the table? If yes, for what reason?

Are there other parish matters that council should include in the final terms of reference? If yes, what are they?

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please contact:

Steven Corrigan
Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: 01491 823049
Email: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

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Joint Council report



Report of the Strategic Director

Author: Steve Bishop

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To: VALE COUNCIL

DATE: 17 July 2013

Report of the Strategic Director

Author: Steve Bishop

Telephone: 01491 823831

E-mail: steve.bishop@southandvale.gov.uk

To: SOUTH COUNCIL

DATE: 18 July 2013

Designating the councils' section 151 chief financial officer

Recommendation

That Council

- (1) designates William Jacobs, the Head of Finance, as the council's section 151 chief financial officer from 1 September 2013;
- (2) authorises the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make any consequential changes required to the council's constitution to reflect this change.

Purpose of Report

1. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires each council to designate one of its officers to have responsibility for the proper administration of its financial affairs.
2. This report recommends that William Jacobs, the Head of Finance, be designated as the "section 151 officer" for both councils from 1 September 2013.

Corporate Objectives

3. The section 151 officer has overall responsibility for the entire financial affairs of the councils, and therefore the satisfactory discharge of that responsibility contributes to all the corporate objectives of the two councils. However, its primary focus is on the 'effective management of resources' objective.

Background

4. The “section 151 officer” (also sometimes referred to as the “chief financial officer” in regulations) is one of three statutory officers at the councils. (The other two being the “Head of Paid Service” and the “Monitoring Officer”). Every unitary, county and district council must designate these three statutory officers.
5. Since 1 April 2009 Steve Bishop has been the section 151 officer for both councils. That decision followed his appointment as one of the strategic directors and reflected the councils’ wishes to designate a senior manager as the section 151 officer for continuity prior to the selection of heads of service and further restructuring. The intention was to review the situation after the restructurings were completed.
6. Prior to the creation of shared posts, Steve Bishop had been the section 151 officer for Vale since July 2004. William had been the section 151 officer for South since April 2007.
7. With most of the joint working established between the two councils and most of the team restructurings completed, it is timely to review the arrangement.
8. It is becoming less common among councils to designate a member of the senior management team as a statutory officer. For example the councils’ monitoring officer has been the Head of Legal and Democratic Services since April 2009. By designating the Head of Finance as the section 151 officer, this would be more consistent.
9. By transferring the responsibility from the Strategic Director to the Head of Finance, this also provides William with greater development opportunities, creates three generic strategic director posts, which in turn provides the chief executive and councils with greater flexibility in future restructurings.
10. The “Money Laundering Reporting Officer” (MLRO) is a separate regulatory role which has been fulfilled by the s.151 officer at both councils. It arises from the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Terrorism Act 2000. Its main responsibilities are to oversee the councils’ arrangements to minimise the risk of laundering criminal proceeds and to report any suspicious transactions to the Serious Organised Crime Agency. This role would also be transferred to William.

Options

11. There are other options which the councils may choose to consider, but the strategic management board recommends their rejection for the reasons stated.
12. The councils could choose not to change the current designation. This option would forego the advantages set out in paragraph 9, in particular we would lose the greater flexibility and development opportunities arising from the re-designation.
13. The councils could choose to designate another officer as section 151 officer. It is a statutory requirement that the section 151 officer must be a suitably experienced professionally qualified accountant. There are nine qualified accountants employed at the two councils and the Head of Finance is the most experienced at fulfilling this role after the strategic director. There would be greater risk from re-

designating another officer into this role, although for succession planning and resilience, other officers may be designated as 'deputy section 151 officer(s)'.

14. Each council could designate a different section 151 officer. This option would be less efficient given the high degree of joint-working as two officers would need to be involved on financial issues that currently require only one. Such an arrangement could also lead to confusion and disruption if the two section 151 officers do not agree on a particular matter.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial consequences associated with this designation. There would be no change in the affected officers' remuneration.

Legal Implications

16. The designation of a section 151 officer is a statutory duty for each council. The proposed redesignations (and the consequential transfer of the MLRO role) will require some minor consequential changes to the councils' constitutions.

Risks

17. The objective of section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 is to reduce financial risk by requiring a designated officer to be responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs. This should reduce the risk of financial malpractice, poor financial planning, fraud, waste and loss.
18. The objective of requiring a professionally qualified and experienced individual to fulfil that role is to promote sound financial management and reduce the risk of financial failure.
19. The Head of Finance is an experienced professionally qualified accountant who has held section 151 responsibilities previously. His designation represents a low risk alternative to the current arrangement, which in turn provides positive benefits.

Other implications

20. The two affected staff - both the Strategic Director and Head of Finance - support this change.

Conclusion

21. Having reviewed the current section 151 chief financial officer arrangements, the councils are recommended to designate the Head of Finance as the section 151 officer for both councils. The proposed designation will require some minor consequential changes to the councils' constitutions. The councils are asked to authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make these changes.

Background Papers

None

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