

REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2013

REPORT BY: LICENSING MANAGER

REPORT AUTHOR: NICKII HUMPHREYS

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Review of Vehicle and Operator Licensing Fees – Consideration of
Objections

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider objections to the proposed variation to the level of fees payable in respect of private hire and hackney carriage licences.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) that the Committee consider the objections received in response to the proposed variation to licensing fees; and**
- (2) that the Committee approve the increase in licensing fees in respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences and private hire operator licences, without modification and to come into immediate effect.**

1.0 Background Information

It has always been the policy of the Committee to recover, where possible, the cost of undertaking the various licensing functions although for some licences/permits, no fee is payable or the licensing fees are controlled centrally by the Government. In these cases, the Council cannot vary the fees to take into account local administrative on-costs.

On 5 November 2008, the Licensing Committee resolved that these fees be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account inflationary and any other increased costs (Minute No. 15/08 refers).

The proposed fees for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences and private hire operator licences are subject to formal public consultation for a period of 28 days by virtue of section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

There is no statutory requirement to advertise the increase in licensing fees in respect of hackney carriage and private hire driver's licences and consequently, the fee increase for driver's licences came into effect on 1 January 2013.

Accordingly, following notification of the proposed increase in licensing fees to all members of the Council by way of the Members Information Sheet on 30 November 2012, and no objections being raised, a public notice was published in The News on 15 December 2012.

2.0 Schedule of Proposed Fee Increases

Licence Type:	Existing Fee: £	Proposed Fee: £
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Private Hire Operators:

Grant or renewal	366.00	377.00
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Private Hire Vehicles:

Grant or renewal	146.00	150.00
Grant or renewal LPG vehicles	135.00	139.00
Grant – January only	73.00	75.00
Renewal – Extension of licence period	239.00	246.00

Hackney Carriage Vehicles:

Grant or renewal	152.00	157.00
Grant or renewal LPG vehicles	140.00	144.00
Renewal – Extension of licence period	268.00	276.00

Members should also be aware that proposed variations to the ancillary administrative charges associated with the grant of vehicle licences, which have already received MIS approval, will be subject to formal public consultation in the immediate future.

A schedule of the proposed variations is shown below:

Licence Type:	Existing Fee: £	Proposed Fee: £
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Private Hire Vehicles:

Car to Car Transfer	122.00	126.00
Car to Car Transfer – Administration Fee	25.00	26.00
Temporary Car to Car Transfer	62.00	64.00
Vehicle Re-Test fee	48.00	49.00

Hackney Carriage Vehicles:

Car to Car Transfer	128.00	132.00
Car to Car Transfer – Administration Fee	26.00	27.00
Temporary Car to Car Transfer	64.00	66.00
Vehicle Re-Test fee	50.00	52.00

Introduction of additional fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles:

Section 49 Transfer of Ownership Notice	-	45.00
Certificate of Compliance – Duplicate Copy	-	10.00

Any objections made to the proposals will be referred to committee for consideration.

3.0 Details of objections

At the time this report was prepared, two objections to the proposed fee increase have been received. These are from Mr Bruce Hall, General Manager of Aqua Cars Ltd and Mr Ian Thompson on behalf of Fast Track Ltd and are attached as Appendix A and B to this report.

4.0 Recovery of costs associated with the provision of the Licensing Service

Sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits a licensing authority to charge such fees as may be sufficient to cover any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the control and supervision of the hackney carriage and private hire trade.

It has always been the policy of the Council to recover, where possible, the cost of undertaking the various licensing functions from the fees charged to licence holders so that the Licensing Service can operate at no net cost to the Council Tax payer.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposed modest increases to licence fees is necessary in order to cover the on-costs for employees, supplies and services, agency and other contracted services so that the licensing budget meets the cash limit requirement as set down in the Council's budget. This will also ensure that the Licensing Service continues to work towards full cost recovery, where possible, in relation to the cost of administration and enforcement of the various licensing functions. The increase also recognises the previous Committee instruction to review fees annually having regard to inflation and to ensure maximum cost recovery

Whilst it is recognised that the current economic climate presents challenges to all, the Council has a statutory duty to administer a wide range of licensing functions and the costs arising from the provision of this function needs to be met from the revenue derived from the licence fee.

It is recommended that the Committee approve the proposed fee increase as it is considered to be a modest increase and will ensure that the cost of the provision of the statutory licensing function in respect of these types of licences/permits is recovered from the fees payable by licence holders and not subsidised by the council tax payer.

THERE ARE NO BACKGROUND PAPERS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS REPORT.



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Licensing Manager
For Head of Community Safety, HIDs & Licensing