

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING - LICENSE FEES 2013/ 14

Licensing Committee – 30 January 2013

Report of the: Deputy Chief Executive & Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For Decision

Executive Summary:

This report considers the appropriate licence fees and associated costs of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing for the 2013/14 financial year to ensure that the 'Taxi Licensing' service remains self-financing, in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.

This report supports the Key Aim of safe communities and effective management of Council Resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Mrs Bracken

Head of Service Head of Environmental and Operational Services – Mr Richard Wilson

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that:

From 1 April 2013 the list of fees and associated costs for licences in respect of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators be varied as follows:

	Existing Fees	New Fees
Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence		
On initial application	£159 for three years	£163 for three years
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£44	£44
On renewal	£115 for three years	£118 for three years
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£44	£44
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence		
	£280 for one year	£290 for one year
Private Hire Operator's Licence		

On initial application	£294 for three years	£300 for three years
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On renewal	£94 for three years	£96 for three years
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Private Hire Driver's Licence

On initial application	£159 for three years	£163 for three years
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Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£44	£44
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On renewal	£115 for three years	£118 for three years
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Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£44	£44
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Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£280 for one year	£290 for one year
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Additional Costs

Change of Hackney Carriage to Private Hire	£66	£68
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Change from Private Hire to Hackney Carriage	£88	£90
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Replace Vehicle Plate	£23	£23
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Replace Identification Badge	£8.70	£9
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Vehicle Re-test	£54.85	£54.85
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Vehicle Partial Re-Test	Half the current MOT fee	Half the current MOT fee
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Change of Ownership of Licensed Vehicle	£65	£67
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Attempting "Knowledge Test" after two failures	£48 for each attempt	£49
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Vehicle Tests –		Owner turning up without their insurance documents will be charged half the fee and the test will not go ahead.
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Copies of existing licences	£8 each	£8 each
Change of address details for a replacement licence or for change of name for vehicle/operator licence	£10.50	£10.50
Change of name and address for a driver's badge	£20	£20

Replacement Vehicles

If a licensed vehicle is replaced during the valid licence period then the cost of licensing the replacement vehicle will be £290. However, if the vehicle is replaced within six months of the issue of the licence then the fee will be reduced by £100 in the first of those six months; £90 in the second; £80 in the third; £70 in the fourth; £60 in the fifth and £50 in the sixth month.

If a licensed vehicle is replaced temporarily for up to 2 months because of damage to it then the fee will be £99 to test and licence the replacement vehicle and a further £99 to test and re-licence the original vehicle.

Medical Fee for new and renewal driver licences for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire payable directly to The Cedars Surgery	£55 for three years	£50 for three years
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Background

1. This taxi licensing service is required to be self-financing and the proposed increases to fees will ensure this is maintained.
2. The licence fees and associated costs of taxi licensing are also increased in line with the 2.5% inflation rate in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.
3. Careful monitoring of income and expenditure has been carried out over the current financial year and the income from licence fees and associated costs, together with expenditure has been in accordance with the objectives laid out in the budget plan.
4. The Driving Standards Agency fee for its Taxi Driver Test, that new applicants are required to take in accordance with the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy, is currently £79.66 payable (weekday fee) to the DSA by the applicant.
5. The Cedars Surgery at Swanley is the current approved Centre for medical examinations with respect to Driver Licence applications in accordance with the Taxi Licensing Policy. Cedars Surgery won the tender early in 2012 with a reduced fee payable by the applicant of £50.

6. The fee for the Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Search remains the same as last year at £44.
7. The three costs mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs, which a new applicant has to pay, mean that in addition to the licence fee set by Members a new applicant for a driver licence will have to pay, if the recommended licence fee increase is approved, a total of £337.66 from 1 April 2013 whilst an applicant for a renewal of a licence will pay a total of £201 from the same date.

	New applicant for driver licence	Renewal of a drivers licence
Application	£163.00	£118.00
CRB	£44.00	£44.00
Medical	£50.00	£50.00
DSA driving test	£79.66	Not applicable
Total	£336.66	£212.00

8. The Licensing team will write to all Hackney Carriage Proprietors, Private Hire Operators and all Drivers after this Licensing Committee meeting to give all parties the opportunity to make comment.

Key Implications

Financial

9. The cost of licence fees takes into account the need to maintain a 'self financing' position for the service. The proposals contained in this report will achieve this.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

10. Should parts of industry believe the authority's fees are at a level which is greater than the costs of the statutory functions then it would be open to them to undertake judicial review proceedings. Should this arise, the authority would need to evidence how it arrived at the fee levels to demonstrate that they have been calculated on a cost recovery basis only.

Equality

11. Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles are available to all groups within the community.

RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

12. If the proposed licence fee increases are not agreed, as proposed, then financial support to the Taxi Licensing Service will have to be borne from within the Council's budgets.

Licensing Committee minutes 26.1.2011

Sources of Information:

Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976.

Taxi Licensing Policy

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**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES DIRECTOR
KRISTEN PATERSON**