

## **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES 2015/2016**

### **Licensing Committee – 02 February 2015**

Report of Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

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#### **This report supports the Key Aim of safer communities**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Ms Lowe (Housing and Community Safety)

**Contact Officer(s)** Mrs. Claire Perry 7325 / 07970 731616

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#### **Recommendation to Licensing Committee:**

That the Licensing Committee recommend that the fee levels as set out in paragraph 7 of the report are appropriate for consultation with the taxi trade.

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#### **Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty and ensure that the 'Taxi Licensing' service remains self-financing, in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.

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#### **Introduction and 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 proposed to be increased in line with the 3.5% inflation rate in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan. All other increases in cost of providing the service have been absorbed by efficiency savings as a result of the Licensing Partnership.
- 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 (DSA) 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) directly 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, previously the cost was £55. The medical testing contract is due to be renewed in 2015.
- 6 The fee for the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Search remains the same at £44. However, applicants can now register online when they apply for a DBS search. The registration lasts for one year and costs £13 per year. This would save an applicant £5 over three years. It allows applicants to take their search certificate from one job to the next and removes the need for an enhanced search to be carried out upon renewal.
- 7 The three costs mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs, which a new applicant has to pay, means, 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 £342.66 from 1 April 2015 whilst an applicant for a renewal of a licence will pay a total of £216 from the same date.

	<b>New applicant for driver licence</b>	<b>Renewal of a drivers licence</b>
<b>Application</b>	£169.00	£122.00
<b>DBS enhanced search</b>	£44.00	£44.00
<b>Medical</b>	£50.00	£50.00
<b>DSA driving test</b>	£79.66	Not applicable
<b>Total</b>	£342.66	£216.00

	<b>Existing Fees</b>	<b>New Fees for 2014/15</b>
<b>Hackney Carriage Driver Licence</b>		
<b>On initial application</b>	£169 for three years	£169 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£213 for three years	£213 for three years
<b>On renewal</b>	£122 for three years	£122 for three years

Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£213 for three years	£213 for three years
<b>Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence</b>	£300 for one year	£300 for one year
<b>Private Hire Operator Licence</b>		
<b>On initial application</b>	£300 for three years	£300 for three years
<b>On renewal</b>	£100 for three years	£100 for three years
<b>Private Hire Driver Licence</b>		
<b>On initial application</b>	£169	£169
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
<b>On renewal</b>	£122 for three years	£122 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£213 for three years	£213 for three years
<b>Private Hire Vehicle Licence</b>	£300 for one year	£300 for one year
<b>Additional Costs</b>		
Change from Hackney Carriage to Private Hire	£70	£70
Change from Private Hire to Hackney Carriage	£90	£90
Replace vehicle plate	£23	£23
Replace driver badge	£9	£9.50
Vehicle re-test	£54.85	£54.85
Vehicle partial re-test	£27.43	£27.43

Change of ownership of licensed vehicle	£69	£69
Attempting "Knowledge Test" after <b>one</b> failure	£50	£50
Failure to attend in time for the vehicle test (10 minutes prior to the test start time)	£27.43	£27.43
Failure to attend with correct documentation	£27.43	£27.43
Copy of existing paper licence	£11	£12
Change of address details for a replacement licence	£11	£12
Change of name for a vehicle or operator licence	£11	£12
Change of name <b>and</b> address for a driver badge	£20	£21
Medical fee for a new and renewal driver licence for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire payable directly to The Cedars Surgery	£50 for three years payable directly to the surgery	£50 for three years payable directly to the surgery
<p><b>Replacement Vehicles</b></p> <p>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 £60.</p> <p>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.</p>		

- 8 It should be noted that there are only small increases in the fees for some of the administrative process; this is due to the increase in cost of paper. All other increases in costs have been met from the accruals of the driver licence fees in previous years. It was an earlier practice to carry forward the driver licence income in thirds as the licence fee is for a three year period. However, recent analysis of the renewal dates for driver licences has identified that the driver licences renew almost equably over the three years. Therefore, it has been possible to use the

accrued income to offset the required increase in income thereby negating the need for the Council to increase the fees and charges to the taxi trade.

- 9 The Licensing Partnership will email those Hackney Carriage Proprietors, Private Hire Operators and Drivers where we have their email addressed after this Licensing Committee meeting to give them the opportunity to make comment. A Notice will also be available on the Council's website.

### **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

- 10 If the Licensing Committee were minded not to approve these fees the Council would not be able to meet the Council's Service and Budget Plan or ensure the Taxi Licensing Service was self-financing.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

- 11 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 Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 12 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 a judicial review proceeding. 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 Impacts

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

**Appendices** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Richard Wilson**  
**Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services**