

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES FROM APRIL 2020

Licensing Committee - 16 March 2020

Report of Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of Safe and Caring Communities and Dynamic and Sustainable Economy

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer(s) Sharon Bamborough, Ext. 7325

Recommendation to Licensing Committee:

That the Licensing Committee recommend that the fee levels as set out in paragraph 8 of the report are appropriate for consultation with the taxi trade.

If following consultation there are no adverse comments to the proposed levels the recommendation is that the proposed fees and charges are implemented from 1 May 2020 and no further meeting is required to confirm the fees.

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.

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 Council's Service and Budget Plan. A fees model, similar to the one used to first set the Gambling Act fees in 2007 was used to calculate the fees and charges. The fees have been calculated by examining the time it takes to carry out the various tasks in processing the application and who in the authority is likely to carry them out. The hourly rates of staff are fed in to a spread sheet to calculate costs for each type of activity.

- 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. There are minimal changes to the fees this year due to efficiency savings that have been made within the Licensing Partnership. Only an inflationary increase of 2.5% is proposed.
- 4 The type of tasks involved in taxi licensing applications include assistance to applicant, checking of an application upon receipt, processing the application. Once processed determining the licence or arranging a hearing and holding a hearing, notification of the decision, prepare and issue the licence, update the records/register, appeal preparation and holding an appeal hearing. Compliance tests of drivers, vehicles and operators. Training of Officers and Members has also been included, as well as the cost of consumables.
- 5 In September 2016 all Council Chief Executives were contacted by the Driving Standards Agency (DVSA) to advise them that they were withdrawing the service of testing the driving standards for new drivers. The Council found alternative tests which cost applicants less money but maintain the standards of the previous test. All new drivers are required to take the test in accordance with the Council's 'Taxi Licensing Policy'. The fee is paid by the applicant directly to the provider. They can now choose between TG Training, Green Penny or Blue Lamp Trust. The cost varies from providers and depends on what day they wish to be tested.
- 6 From 1 April 2019 drivers needed to obtain their required medical certificate from their own GP (or other GP if their own GP could not do it) and pay them directly. This fee will vary and is out of our control. One of the reasons for drivers to use their own GP for the medical is that they will have their full medical history.
- 7 The fee for the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Search has reduced to £40. However, applicants can 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 £1 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. The Licensing Team promotes the uptake of the online checking service as it assists in streamlining the online form application process.

	Application for a new HC driver licence	Renewal of a HC driver's licence	Application for a new PH driver licence	Renewal of a PH driver's licence
Computerised Knowledge test	£50.00	Not applicable	£50.00	Not applicable
Application	£199.00	£109	£162	£109
DBS enhanced search	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00
Driving Standards Assessment test (Price dependant on provider driver chooses)	£72 to £130	Not applicable	£72 to £130	Not applicable
Total	£361 to £419	£149	£324 to £382	£149

	Existing Fees	New Fees from May 2020
Hackney Carriage Driver Licence		
Computerised Knowledge test	£47	£50 * (Higher than inflationary increase as more time spent on knowledge test bookings)
On initial application	£194 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years	£199 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service

	Existing Fees	New Fees from May 2020
Total (including DBS fee and Knowledge test fee)	£281 for three years	£289 for three years
<i>On renewal</i>	£106 for three years	£109 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£146 for three years	£149 for three years
Dual Driver Licence		
Computerised Knowledge test	£47	£50 * (Higher than inflationary increase as more time spent on knowledge test bookings)
On initial application	£194 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years	£199 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee and Knowledge test fee)	£281 for three years	£289 for three years
<i>On renewal</i>	£106 for three years	£109 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£146 for three years	£149 for three years
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£341 for one year	£350 for one year

	Existing Fees	New Fees from May 2020
Private Hire Operator Licence		
On initial application - 5 year licence	£504 for five years	£517 for five years
<i>On renewal - 5 year licence</i>	£489 for five years	£501 for five years
On initial application - 3 year licence	£346 for three years	£355 for three years
<i>On renewal - 3 year licence</i>	£331 for three years	£339 for three years
On initial application - 1 year licence	£190 for one year	£195 for one year
<i>On renewal - 1 year licence</i>	£178 for one year	£182 for one year
Private Hire Driver Licence		
Computerised knowledge test	£47	£50
On initial application	£158 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years	£162 (excluding knowledge test fee) for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee and Knowledge test fee)	£240 for three years	£252 for three years
<i>On renewal</i>	£106 for three years	£109 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£40 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£146 for three years	£149 for three years

	Existing Fees	New Fees from May 2020
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£341 for one year	£350 for one year
Additional Costs		
Change from Hackney Carriage to Private Hire	£74	£76
Change from Private Hire to Hackney Carriage	£94	£96
Replace vehicle plate	£25	£26
Replace driver badge	£10	£11
Vehicle re-test	£54.85	£56
Vehicle partial re-test	£27.43	£28
Change of ownership of licensed vehicle	£73	£75
Failure to attend in time for the vehicle test (10 minutes prior to the test start time)	£54.85	£56
Failure to attend with correct documentation	£54.85	£56
Copy of existing paper licence	£12	£13
Change of address details for a replacement licence	£12	£13
Change of name for a vehicle or operator licence	£12	£13
Change of name and address for a driver badge	£22	£23

	Existing Fees	New Fees from May 2020
<p>Replacement Vehicles</p> <p>If a licensed vehicle is replaced during the valid licence period then the cost of licensing the replacement vehicle will be £350. 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 £109 to test and licence the replacement vehicle and a further £109 to test and re-licence the original vehicle.</p>		

- 9 The figures provided for the types of licence are as a result of using the spreadsheets as detailed above. This provides us with a far more accurate method of determining whether the Council is covering its costs for the Taxis and Private Hire Licensing service.
- 10 The Licensing Partnership will email those Hackney Carriage Proprietors, Private Hire Operators and Drivers where we have their email addresses to advise them of the proposed fees. Should adverse comments be received regarding the fees a further Licensing Committee meeting will be held to provide them the opportunity to make comment. A Notice will also be available on the Council's website.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

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

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.

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 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 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.

