

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Clack (Chairman)

Cllr. Abraham (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs. Bonin, Dr. Canet, Edwards-Winsler, Layland, Raikes, Roy, Waterton and Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Esler and Pett

1. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 23 March 2022 and 10 May 2022 and the Hearings held on 1 April 2022, 19 April 2022, 9 May 2022, 17 May 2022 and 18 July 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Actions from the previous meeting

There were none.

4. Hackney Carriage And Private Hire Licensing: Licence Fees And Charges 2023/24

The Head of the Licensing Partnership presented the report which set out the option to increase fees by 5% for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Fees and Charges 2023/24.

Fees were substantially reviewed the previous year and instead of a simple inflationary increase, they were completely re-worked and the increases to fees were largely more than inflation in several areas. They were based around assumptions of the number of applications received. Monitoring of income and expenditure had been carried out since the newer fees had come into effect in April 2022, but it was too soon to establish whether the fees introduced would deliver the desired outcome. This would likely fluctuate and change during the remainder of the financial year.

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It was explained that the fees could be reviewed later in the financial year following the pending salary award and other expenses and it was highlighted that the number of licensed drivers had not reached the numbers seen before the pandemic. The Driver's licences were renewed every 3 years and Members were made aware that this could be changed, although the Licensing Team advised against this at the time.

The Head of the Licensing Partnership confirmed that if Members ultimately decided, following an initial consultation, to increase the Fees by an alternative value less than 5% then this could be done without needing to go back out to a further consultation.

Members discussed the report and considered the increase to fees. It was considered that 5% was less than inflation and fuel prices were falling so the increase should be considered. Some Members considered it might be better to stagger an increase to fees rather than wait until the end of the financial year. Other Members raised concern over the large increases in the previous year and the impact on Drivers' costs.

Members were advised that the fee rates were about remaining cost-neutral and to ensure the service remained self-financing. It was difficult to forecast costs and the number of driver applications but more accurate details would be known by the end of the financial year. Members suggested that the outlook would be clearer in January and it would be beneficial for the Committee to review this at the next meeting should Members decide to keep the fees unchanged.

Resolved: That

- a) the current fees, as set out below remained unchanged; and
- b) an update report be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee in January 2023.

	Cost
Knowledge Test	£51.50 per test
EQUO online test	£66
New Driver application	£264 for three years
Driver Renewal application	£183 for three years

Dual Driver Licence

	Cost
Knowledge Test	£51.50 per test
EQUO online test	£66
New Driver application	£264 for three years
Driver Renewal application	£183 for three years

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence

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	Cost
New and Renewal Application	£325 for one year
 Private Hire Operator Licence	
	Cost
New application for 5 year licence	£747
Renewal for 5 year licence	£586
New application for 3 year licence	£534
Renewal for 3 year licence	£374
New application for 1 year licence	£324
Renewal for 1 year licence	£164
 Private Hire Driver Licence	
	Cost
Knowledge Test	£51.50
EQUO Online Test	£66 per test
New Driver application	£264 for three years
Driver Renewal application	£183 for three years
 Private Hire Vehicle Licence	
	Cost
New and Renewal Application	£297 for one year
 Additional Costs	
	Cost
DBS application	£40
DBS administration fee	£30
Change of Driver Licence type	£54
Replace Vehicle Plate	£18
Replace Driver Badge	£24
Change of Ownership of licensed vehicle	£27
Duplicate paper licence	£10
Temporary Replacement	£33
Add or remove a name from a vehicle licence	£18
Change of name and address (driver badge not included)	£18
Private hire exemption certificate	£42
General Admin Fee	£30

5. Pavement Licensing/Off Sales - Legislative Update 2022

The Head of the Licensing Partnership presented the report which updated the Committee on changes to legislation which affected Pavement Licences and off sales of alcohol. In July 2020, the Business and Planning Act 2020 came into effect which made it easier for premises serving food and drink such as bars, restaurants

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and pubs to seat and serve customers outdoors through temporary changes to planning procedures and alcohol licensing. This moved the responsibility for licensing of furniture on the highway from the County Council (Highways Service) to the District Council level and was taken on by Licensing. It also provided that where an existing premises licence (issued under the Licensing Act 2003) authorised the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, they could also provide sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises. This had been further extended to 30 September 2023, to allow time for government to introduce further legislation which would permanently pass the licensing of furniture on the highway (Pavement Licensing) to District Council level.

Members were advised that there were initially shortcomings of the legislation that made enforcement and compliance difficult for the Licensing Team. The Head of the Licensing Partnership had vocalised concerns to the Local Government Association (LGA) whom were considering adopting further enforcement measures such as fixed penalty notices.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

6. Licensing Partnership Annual Update

The Head of the Licensing Partnership presented the annual update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership 2021/22. She explained that the Partnership was continuing to meet a good standard despite the hardship of the pandemic over recent years.

Members asked questions about the impacts of working from home and remote training. The Partnership had continued to maintain high levels of output and had seen a smooth shift to remote working. Training had to be adapted to the remote working arrangements but this had not impacted on performance.

Members expressed their thanks to the Head of the Licensing Partnership and the Team for all their hard work over recent years.

Resolved: That the performance of the Licensing Partnership as contained in the report be noted and the Head of the Licensing Partnership be asked to continue to provide an annual update on the activity of the Licensing Partnership to the Committee each municipal year.

7. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted with the following addition(s):

January 2022

- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing: Licence Fees And Charges 2023/24

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September 2023

- Licensing Partnership Annual Update 2022/23
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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.46 PM

CHAIRMAN