

Appendix A

PROPOSED CHANGE IN TAXI LICENSING FEES

		2022/23	2023/24	%
	Notes		Proposed	Increase
Driver - 3 years		£213.0	£228.5	7.28%
- 2 years		£199.0	£213.5	7.29%
- 1 year		£186.0	£199.5	7.26%
Vehicles	1	£149.0	£145.0	-2.68%
Transfer fee		£108.0	£116.5	7.87%
Operator		£508.0	£549.5	8.17%

Notes

1. The vehicle proposed fee for 2023/24 includes a discount of £16 which reflects a balance of £29,000 that the Council has overcharged for vehicle licenses in since April 2021. With this discount in place it is anticipated that this balance will be eliminated in 2023/24.

Appendix B

PROPOSED CHANGE IN TAXI LICENSING FEES

		2022/23	2023/24	
	Notes		Proposed	Increase
Driver - 3 years		£213	£226	6.10%
Vehicles	1	£149	£145	-2.68%
Transfer fee		£108	£116.5	7.87%
Operator		£508	£549.5	8.17%

Note

1. The proposed vehicle license fee for 2023/24 includes a discount of £16 to accommodate a balance of £29,000 that the Council has overcharged on these licenses since April 2021. With the application of this discount, it is anticipated that this balance will be eliminated in 2023/24

Appendix C

TAXI LICENSING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - 3 YEAR VIEW

	Notes	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast
Costs				
Licensing staffing		209,788	201,050	207,100
Admin costs	1	6,469	5,200	5,350
Materials & driver checks		75,109	61,650	61,940
Management		33,296	26,850	27,650
Accounting		2,767	2,250	2,300
Internal audit		1,757	1,400	1,450
HR		10,983	8,850	9,100
Mail/Printing		9,962	8,050	8,250
Customer services	2	42,818	34,500	35,550
ICT		49,210	39,650	41,250
Accommodation		5,419	4,350	4,500
Legal		10,124	8,400	8,650
Committee services		7,037	5,750	5,950
Safeguarding		18,671	15,500	16,000
Income		513,016	404,350	406,040
Net surplus/(deficit)		<u>29,606</u>	<u>(19,100)</u>	<u>(29,000)</u>

Notes:

1. Travel and staff training
2. Customer services costs are allocated out according to the % of time staff spend on Taxi licensing related issues

Appendix D

MOVEMENT ON THE LICENSING RESERVE

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Opening balance as at 1/4	34,507	64,113	45,013
Expenditure	483,410	423,450	436,600
Income	513,016	404,350	407,600
Closing balance as at 31/3	<u>64,113</u>	<u>45,013</u>	<u>16,013</u>

Appendix E

9 drivers responded and stated they did not want to meet and failed to leave comments
4 drivers/operators responded with comments below and stated they would like to meet.

1

I cannot see justification for the increase as fees are already high. The trade has been enforced to accept rapid operating cost increases notably with fuel and cost of living.
I would expect the licensing authority to work with us in a positive way by managing their costs.

Response

Emailed and advised of 2nd consultation with revised fee

2

With absolute respect this is not a consultation, however it is a really good idea to have some discussion and some dates for such discussions to take place.
I will drop a line to Russ Way regarding some proposals.

Response

Emailed and advised of 2nd consultation with revised fee

3

It was difficult to work out the relevance / appropriateness of the fees, without seeing the accounts, which I believe you used to provide. Would it be possible to have sight of these please?
It would also be useful to have a Teams meeting regarding fees, I did a Zoom with Uttlesford members last week and subsequently received calls from licenses. I feel your initiative to speak to individuals is fine,, but better still would be a collaborative online discussion and this would have been better within this consultation period.
As I received notification of the two consultations running concurrently via a third party, I believe a collaborative discussion would still be good.

Response

Emailed and advised of 2nd consultation with revised fee

4

What are the justifications for the raise. We have not seen the accounts as per our trade agreement. The decisions to increase previous licence cost, the huge application burden and subsequent marking of vehicles and badge display has led to reduced numbers of applications and renewals - UDC action that should not result in the penalisation of the remaining trade.

Response

Emailed and advised of 2nd consultation with revised fee

Appendix F

4 drivers responded to the consultation with the following responses

1

Given inflation is at 10% >, and the rampant cost of living increase, this is not an acceptable time to increase license costs which is in the main being implemented to cover the significant pay award given to Council staff.

Response

Thank you for your email regarding the recent taxi and PHV fees consultation.

I understand that the UK (and taxi trade) is in a post pandemic recovery phase. However, the legislation that we are bound by and which we set the fees is based on a cost recover service.

One of those aspects is staff cost. All local government staff have had a £2K pay rise. Also for some a yearly increment. In real terms this means, for the majority of licensing staff they have had just shy of a 10% pay rise.

This unfortunately is reflected in the increase this year in the fees.

I hope this gives some clarity for the rise this year.

Kind regards

Russell Way
Licensing Manager
01799 510448

2

At this present time does this apply to new drivers.

Response

Thank you for your email regarding the recent taxi and PHV fees consultation.

I understand that the UK (and taxi trade) is in a post pandemic recovery phase. However, the legislation that we are bound by and which we set the fees is based on a cost recover service.

One of those aspects is staff cost. All local government staff have had a £2K pay rise. Also, for some a yearly increment. In real terms this means, for the majority of licensing staff they have had just shy of 10% pay rise.

This unfortunately is reflected in the increase this year in the fees.

Specifically, this will cover new and renewal drivers.

I hope this gives some clarity for the rise this year.

Kind regards

Russell Way
Licensing Manager
01799 510448

3

The CCTV and Fees consultation that Uttlesford District Council undertook at very short notice period for operators to be aware and consulted, this I feel is unreasonable.

Response

Thank you for your email regarding the recent taxi and PHV fees consultation.

I understand that the UK (and taxi trade) is in a post pandemic recovery phase. However, the legislation that we are bound by and which we set the fees is based on a cost recover service.

One of those aspects of fees is staff cost. All local government staff have had a £2K pay rise. Also, for some a yearly increment. In real terms this means, for many licensing staff they have had just shy of 10% pay rise.

This unfortunately is reflected in the increase this year in the fees.

The Fees review is a yearly process. This will be my third year completing it. The review ensures we set our fees for the next financial year at a cost recovery basis only. It also ensures that we pay money back to the trade if there is an overcharge. Indeed, we have done this this year - reducing vehicle fees.

As for the CCTV consultation. The Department for Transport have requested all licensing committees consider CCTV. The results of the CCTV consultation will take time to review and to calculate cost before presenting to committee. I do not have time scales for this project.

I hope this gives some clarity for the rise in fees and the CCTV consultation that was processed

Kind regards

Russell Way
Licensing Manager
01799 510448

4

Following the difficulties with your first fees consultation and your magnanimous decision to re -

consult and kindly give the trade the opportunity to engage with you, here are my thoughts having spoken to several LPHCA members, in person or via Zoom. I also endeavoured to contact all of Uttlesford's Licensed Operators based on LPHCA's held data, research and the list you kindly provided, by email.

In my considerable comms, I did suggest the importance of responding, however given the time of year, recent weather and much industrial action that directly affects the trade, responses may be sparse. That said I got enough quality feedback to give you a fair taxi & PHV Trade perspective.

As a Trade Body, when fee increases happen, we endeavour to check budgets and previous accounts, which I understand used to be available, I am led to believe however, that recently they may not have been provided. The table was helpful but spartan, with respect. Hopefully following this feedback, now we are post pandemic, they can be available going forward.

Regarding looking at the fees set out in the table, it is good to see some very minor reductions and it seems a shame that there were not more given that some licensing authorities have managed to do that and help the trade.

Following the pandemic, and as I predicted in previous responses, the trade is contracting and will continue to contract. This has in the main been caused by the high costs of being a driver with fees being very much part of the increased expenses. Cost is not the whole picture, because time, bureaucracy and regulatory requirements play a part too, which I will put to one side to focus on licensing fees.

I was pleased to attend yesterday the live session you hosted, which covered using tech to streamline processes and hopefully reduce licensing costs and bureaucracy, alongside the catastrophic shortages of drivers, particularly in the Special educational needs and disability (SEND) transport sector.

As I will be continuing my quest elsewhere on the wider difficulties of becoming licensed and articulating my thoughts to all the interested parties, I will summarise the LPHCA's position on fees below based on feedback received from members and the wider trade in Uttlesford.

With a recession very likely and almost certainly upon us, alongside costs and inflation in the sector (vehicle fuel, insurance and maintenance costs for drivers, with heating, electricity and much more for operators in some cases doubling costs, with more pain to follow, it would be far better to freeze, not increase fees costs, until the future is clearer.

Just today an Uttlesford Licensed LPHCA member stopped their membership because they can no longer deal with the costs, bureaucracy and regulatory requirements upon them. Fee increases at this time may cause further loss of drivers and operators, so the LPHCA would like to seek a freeze for 12 months.

We can then look at budgets and potential savings, I suggested one yesterday with there only being individual payments by card and no fleet facility on the new system. This will increase overheads in the licensing department as well as for operators, my hope is we can work together for solutions that will reduce costs for all.

Response

Thank you for your email in regard to the fees consultation.

Firstly, I wanted to thank you for attending the recent idox workshop and I would like to thank you for the positive input you made. I was also pleased that you were able to reach out to one of our operators with some sound advice.

As you have highlighted, I have managed to reduce the fees (slightly) between the first and second consultation. I appreciate cost is always an important factor to any business. But, that small £2.50 cost could have been saved the trade time and effort in the long term. I intended to digitise the medical process by using electronic forms from April 2023. Operators where very positive about this. This would have been at a small cost to the trade, but this would have streamlined the medical process, saving staff time and effort. Just imagine no more signed pieces of paper, drivers not having to go to the Dr with a piece of paper and then returning it to the operator. However, I will think again and consider alternative solutions. The lesson I learned is that I think feedback is important, but it must come after understanding.

I was therefore disappointed no operators accepted or proposed a new date to come and discuss the fees this year with myself and my colleagues.

I hope that in the future, there will be greater collaboration and understanding before feedback.

Next year I will try, again.

Kind regards

Russell Way
Licensing Manager
01799 510448