

Committee: Licensing and Environmental Health

Date:

Title: Proposed 2024/25 Licence Fees for Hackney
Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles
and Operators

23 January 2024

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Summary

1. This reports sets out the procedure for the setting of Licence fees for applications within the remit of the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee, and updates Members on the proposed Licence fees for the period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report
3. It is recommended that the Committee refer the approval of the revised fees to full council following the end of the consultation period and the production of the full report findings.

Financial Implications

4. The Local Authority is required to review its fees and charges as part of its annual budget setting process. In accordance with both legislation and guidance, it is appropriate for fees and charges associated with the Licensing regime to be set as cost-recoverable.

Background Papers

- 5.

- A. Proposed Licence fees for 2024/25, and costs/income from 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25
- B. Local Government Association Guidance on locally set Licence fees (Dec 2023)
- C. S70 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	Statute requires notice of proposed changes to be published in at least one local newspaper for a period of at least 28 days.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	Any changes in fees must be communicated to all existing licence holders, and consultation on any proposed changes will be conducted with interested parties and the wider public to ensure there is an opportunity to contribute to any such decision.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Local Authority is permitted to charge a reasonable fee for the grant of a licence with the view to recovering the costs of the issue, administration and supervision of such licences.

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. In accordance with S70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Local Authority is required to consult with interested parties where there is any proposal by it to vary the existing fee structure. The requirement relates only to vehicle and operator licences, however the Authority has previously done and continues to include driver fees within this consultation for full transparency.
8. Consultation for the upcoming financial year was necessary as there are small increases compared with the previous year period. The proposed fees and current fees are both illustrated in **Background Paper A** for Members' assistance.
9. The reason for the increase relates only to national inflationary changes, the Council wide staff pay award, and any staff salary increments applicable within the Licensing Team. Therefore, increases have been kept to a minimum, however, still necessary in order to fully recover the permitted costs associated with the issue, administration and supervision of the licensing regime.
10. **Background Paper A** additionally shows the movement on the licensing reserve. The licensing reserve holds the income that pays for the cost of work required in future years of Driver and Operator licences, which are generally issued for 3- and 5-year durations respectively. The surpluses transferred to the licensing reserve in 2023/24 and 2024/25 are caused by an increase in the volume and cost of driver licences being issued compared to the previous years, so that more income is transferred to the reserve than taken from it.
11. The consultation commenced on the 18th January 2024 lasting for a period of 28

days, with a final date for objections of 15th February 2024. In accordance with the statutory requirements, the proposals were published on the Authority's website, in a local newspaper, and sent directly to existing licence holders by way of email. Licensing Officers will additionally look to offer both an in-person and/or virtual meeting with members of the Taxi and Private Hire trade for their views.

12. As the consultation is in progress at the time of this Committee, it is not possible to present Members with the full report findings or be able to seek the Committee's referral for approval to full council.

13. Members are advised to refer to **Background Paper B and C** for further information and clarification on Licence fee setting from the Local Government Association and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 respectively.