

Committee: Council

Date:

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

Monday,
26 February 2024

Lead Councillor Alex Armstrong,

Member: Chair of the Licensing and Environmental
Health Committee

Report Jamie Livermore, Senior Licensing &

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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 effective from 1 April 2024 relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators.
2. At the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee of 23 January 2024, Members resolved to refer the approval of the proposed fees to full Council following the end of the consultation period and the production of the full report findings.

Recommendations

3. It is recommend that Council approve the 2024/25 fees proposed within Appendix A of this report.

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.

Appendix A: Proposed Licence fees for 2024/25, and costs/income from 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25

Appendix B: Responses and objections received from the public consultation

Appendix C: Local Government Association Guidance on locally set Licence fees (Dec 2023)

Appendix D: 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's period. The proposed fees and current fees are both illustrated in **Appendix 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. **Appendix 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 18 January 2024 lasting for a period of 28 days, with a final date for objections of 15 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 had additionally offered to hold both an in person and online meeting with members of the taxi and private hire trade, however there was no take up on an in person meeting and the one licensed driver who signaled intent to attend the online meeting did not show.
12. The consultation resulted in a total of 29 responses, 25 of which were objections to the proposals. Those responses are shown in **Appendix B**. Where requested, individual responses have been given by Licensing Officers.
13. The feedback from the consultation shows that close to 50% of the responses reference either or both the presence of 'touting' and UBER at Stansted Airport, but both of these are unrelated matters to the setting of licence fees.
14. Members are advised to refer to **Appendix C** and **D** for further information and clarification on Licence fee setting from the Local Government Association and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 respectively.