

REPORT TO:	Licensing Committee
DATE:	20th September 2017
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Planning and Public Protection
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SUBJECT:	Proposed Changes to Taxi Licensing Fees and Tariff Charges

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members approval for the changes in fees and charges for the taxi licensing regime.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider the approval of revised fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing regime notably operator, vehicle, driver licences and tests. These fees were last reviewed by the Licensing Committee in 2008.
- 2.2 Members should note that the proposed fees are to be introduced alongside changes to make the licensing process more efficient.

3.0 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and The Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 Sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ("the Act") allow the Council to charge fees for the grant of licences in respect of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators. The legislation specifies the elements that can be included in the cost of the licence fee.
- 4.2 The cost of issue and administration can be recovered in drivers' licence fees. In respect of vehicle and operator licences, the reasonable cost of inspecting vehicles, providing hackney carriage stands and any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the foregoing

and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles can be included in the fees.

- 4.3 The cost for the enforcement of unlicensed drivers, vehicles or operators cannot be included in the calculation. The Council cannot make a profit from licence fees and there must be a carry forward of any surplus. There can also be recovery of any deficit. The reconciliation of any surplus and deficit is over a three-year cycle.
- 4.4 A fees and charges methodology has been devised to allow for a detailed review of fees and charges in line with the relevant licensing process.
- 4.5 The current and proposed fee structures are shown in Appendix A.
- 4.6 The last increase in the fees and charges for taxi licensing was in April 2008, save for an increase to the Private Hire Driver fee to its current level in 2009.
- 4.7 Since October 2015 licences can be issued for a period of 5 years for operators, 3 years for drivers and 1 year for vehicles. The Council has not introduced a procedure for the issue for such a period and it is proposed that such process is introduced alongside the proposed fees and charges structure.
- 4.8 Legislation allows for the issuing of licence for a lesser duration in certain circumstances of an individual case, not because of a blanket policy.
- 4.9 Members should note that should they approve the revised table of fees then Section 70 of the Act also requires them to be advertised in the local press giving at least 28 days for objections.
- 4.10 Should there be any objections then these will need to be considered and reported back to this committee along with any revisions considered appropriate
- 4.11 If no objections are made then these fees will come into effect on 1st December 2017.
- 4.12 Fees need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that full cost recovery is achieved, staffing costs, on costs and the cost of materials increase on an annual basis, if fees are not reviewed then the fees may not achieve full cost recovery.
- 4.13 Officers wish to highlight to Members that the current process for obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check every 3 years

will be changing. The Council has contracted out this service and will no longer be involved in the administration of the process and instead each individual will be responsible for obtaining their own certificates. It is anticipated that will start in the Autumn of 2017.

- 4.14 Officers are proposing that 3 yearly drivers' licences follow the 3 yearly DBS process. To ensure drivers outside the DBS cycle when the proposed fees are introduced are not placed at a disadvantage then the current annual renewal fee will be retained up until such time as their next DBS becomes due.
- 4.15 Officers wish also to highlight that the Council has recently received a request to review the taxi meter tariff charges for hackney carriage vehicles. This request is supported by over 100 drivers. As a consequence officers will need to carry out a review of the charges and implement a consultation on those charges.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That Members

- 1) Approve the fees and charges at Appendix A.
- 2) Authorise officers to publish the changes to the Taxi Licensing fees in a local newspaper for the necessary consultation, and if no objections are received, they will come into effect on 1 December 2017.
- 3) Request that where any objections are received, the Licensing Committee will consider those objections at their next meeting with a view to implementing (with or without modification) not later than 1 January 2018.
- 4) Note the administrative changes to the licensing regime.
- 5) Authorise officers to conduct a review of taxi tariff charges and consult as necessary with a view to reporting findings to the Cabinet for implementation no later than 1 January 2018.