
Consultation Responses: Fees for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators

Committee considering report:	Licensing Committee
Date of Committee:	23 January 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tom Marino
Report Author:	Moira Fraser
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC4133

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To note that, save for the private hire operator and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees, the Committee has already agreed to recommend the fees and charges proposed at the November meeting to full Council for approval.
- 1.2 To consider the matters arising from the statutory 28 day consultation period relating to variations to operators and vehicle licence fees.

2 Recommendation

The Licensing Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the comments received during the statutory consultation on variations to operators and vehicle licence fees as set out in Appendix A to this report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Discretionary fees and charges relating to licences and registrations are based on cost recovery, and should they not reflect the cost of providing the service, there is a risk of generating a surplus or deficit.</p> <p>All costs associated with running the consultation are met from within existing budgets. The cost of placing public notices in the two local newspapers increased from £1357.36 in 2021 to £1474.79 in 2022</p>

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Implication	Commentary
Human Resource:	There are no human resources implications associated with the consultation. The consultation was undertaken within existing resources within the PPP and the RCP Team.
Legal:	<p>The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Advertising variations to operators and vehicle licence fees set out in s70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976</p> <p>(3) (a) If a district council determine that the maximum fees specified in subsection (2) of this section should be varied they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. setting out the variation proposed, 2. drawing attention to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection and 3. specifying the period, which shall not be less than twenty-eight days from the date of the first publication of the notice, within which and the manner in which objections to the variation can be made. <p>3(b) A copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall for the period of twenty-eight days from the date of the first publication thereof be deposited at the offices of the council which published the notice and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.</p> <p>The legal implications of the consultation were discussed with Beth Varcoe, Laura Knowles and Patricia Brown prior to the consultation starting. Legal colleagues have also been consulted on this report.</p>
Risk Management:	The fees are potentially subject to legal challenge. It is therefore important that the fees and methodology are subject to ongoing review.
Property:	None
Policy:	<p>The Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) is required every autumn to propose a budget to partner authorities. This includes proposals in relation to discretionary fees and charges. The individual authorities are then required to make their own decisions in relation to the fees.</p> <p>It is not the role of this Committee to set the fees for 2023/24. The Committee is being asked to consider the comments made</p>

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Implication	Commentary			
	in relation to the operators and vehicle licence fees received during the statutory consultation.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:		✓		No evident contribution to inequality The income received from licence applicants covers the cost of providing the statutory licensing function.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		No impact
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		No impact
Environmental Impact:	✓			The introduction of a remittance on the fees for hybrid and electric vehicles may have a positive impact on the environment.
Health Impact:	✓			If operators and drivers are minded to take up the offer of a reduced or wholly subsidised fee for electric or hybrid vehicles this could have a positive impact on air quality and therefore have a positive impact on health.
ICT Impact:		✓		No impact

Implication	Commentary		
Digital Services Impact:		✓	This information will be included on the Public Protection Partnership Website using existing resources.
Council Strategy Priorities:	✓		Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire.
Core Business:		✓	No impact
Data Impact:		✓	No impact
Consultation and Engagement:	Members of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade as well as members of the public, Councillors and service users were consulted on the statutory fees as is required by the legislation. This was enabled via emails directly to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle licence holders and Private Hire Operators, a public notice in the Newbury Weekly News and the Reading Chronicle, a notice placed in Market Street Reception window and a consultation notice added to the Public Protection Partnership website and the West Berkshire Council website for the mandatory 28 day consultation period. In addition an email notification was sent to the Community Panel.		

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 A set of fees, proposed by the Joint Public Protection Committee, were presented to the Licensing Committee at the [07 November 2022 meeting](#). The Committee agreed that, save for the private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees, the discretionary fees go forward for consideration as part of the Council fee setting process.
- 4.2 The Committee also agreed that the fees for private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees be subjected to a twenty eight day statutory consultation period. If objections were received they be considered by the Licensing Committee at this meeting and that any changes arising from the consultation be recommended to full Council for approval. The fees, with or without variation would come into effect on the 01 April 2023.
- 4.3 The proposed 2023/24 fees subject to the statutory consultation are set out below:

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Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicle Licence

Hackney carriage vehicle new / renewal	£288.00/ £256.00*
Private hire vehicle new / renewal	£288.00/ £256.00*
Private hire vehicle with dispensation new / renewal	£288.00/ £256.00*
Temporary Vehicle Licence (issued up to 3 months maximum)	£256.00
<p>*It was agreed at the Executive meeting on 22 September 2022, that West Berkshire Council would offer a fee based remittance scheme, subsidised by the council, and that it be introduced from 1 April 2023 for both electric and hybrid vehicles that met the agreed criteria.</p>	

Private Hire Operator Licence

	Number of vehicles	New	Renewal
New Per vehicle calculation of 3.5 hours (at £64.00 hourly rate) plus an hour per year (years 2-5) for first vehicle, plus 15 minutes per additional vehicle per years (years 1-5) up to a maximum of 20 vehicles	1	£480	£352
	2	£560	£432
	3	£640	£512
	4	£720	£592
	5	£800	£672
	6	£880	£752
	7	£960	£832
	8	£1040	£912
	9	£1120	£992
	Renewal Per vehicle calculation of 1.5 hours (at £64 hourly rate) plus an hour per year (years 2-5) for first vehicle, plus 15 minutes per additional vehicle per years (years 1-5) up to a maximum of 20 vehicles	10	£1200
11		£1286	£1152
12		£1360	£1232
13		£1440	£1312
14		£1520	£1392
15		£1600	£1472
16		£1680	£1552
17		£1760	£1632
18		£1840	£1712
19		£1920	£1792
20		£2000	£1872
Variation to licence	£64	£64	

4.4 Who and How we Consulted

- The consultation ran from 17 November 2022 to 15 December 2022.
- A notice was placed in the Newbury Weekly News and the Reading Chronicle on the 17 November 2022.
- The consultation was also posted on the West Berkshire Council consultation pages and the PPP website on the 17 November 2022.
- It was also emailed to 1142 members of the Community Panel who expressed an interest in Roads, Transport and Parking.
- A copy of the notice was also placed in the Market Street Reception on the 16 November 2022.
- A copy of the notice was emailed individually to all licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Proprietors for their comments on the 16 November 2022.

4.5 Four responses to the consultation were received and it was agreed that these would be reported back to this Committee. These comprised two responses from residents and two were from parish councillors who were also members of the Community Panel. Two respondents supported the proposed changes to the fees. One respondent registered concerns that higher fees were leading to the trade having to charge higher fares and as a result this was having a negative impact on the trade. This respondent confirmed that he was not objecting to the modifications but was merely commenting on them. The final response raised some concerns about the content of the knowledge test and supported the remittance being offered in relation to electric and hybrid vehicles.

4.6 The comments received were discussed at the Taxi Trade Liaison Group meeting on the 09 January 2023. Given the low number of responses received it was agreed that it could be inferred that the fees were being set at an acceptable level. The trade commented that it was not their experience that there were a large number of vehicles sitting on the ranks. The comments relating to the knowledge test would be included in the discussion paper on this subject which would be presented to the July 2023 Committee meeting.

4.7 As comments have been received but they do not constitute objections the existing proposed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and private hire operator's fees will be included in the paperwork for the 02 March 2023 Full Council without modification and will come into effect as of the 01 April 2023.

5 Other options considered

5.1 There are no alternative options, as the consideration of the objections and setting of the fees are legal requirements as outlined above.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A – Comments Received During the Consultation.

Background Papers:

[Section 70\(1\) of the Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Wards affected: All

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