
Variations to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operator's Fees

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| Committee considering report: | Licensing Committee |
| Date of Committee: | 20 January 2025 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Justin Pemberton |
| Report Author: | Moira Fraser |

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider the matters arising from the statutory 28 day consultation period relating to variations to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and private hire operator's fees.

2 Recommendation

The Licensing Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 **CONSIDER** the comments received during the statutory consultation on variations to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and private hire operator's fees as set out in **Appendix A** to this report and if any modifications should be made to the proposed fees as a result of the consultation responses.

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 via public notice was met from within existing budgets.</p> |
| Human Resource: | <p>There are no human resources implications associated with the consultation. The consultation was undertaken within existing resources within the PPP and the Recruitment, Consultation and Performance Team.</p> |

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| Implication | Commentary |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>Fees for vehicle and operators' licences</p> <p>s.70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976: "...a district council may charge such fees for the grant of vehicle and operators' licences as may be resolved by them from time to time and as may be sufficient in the aggregate to cover in whole or in part:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the reasonable cost of the carrying out by or on behalf of the district council of inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles for the purpose of determining whether any such licence should be granted or renewed; (b) the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands; and (c) any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the foregoing and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles." <p>The licensing costs recoverable by a district authority in respect of vehicles and operators is limited to vehicle inspection costs for the specific purpose of determining their suitability to be licensed, reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands, reasonable administration costs for processing the licence application and finally reasonable costs associated with "...control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles."</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>The fees are potentially subject to legal challenge. It is therefore important that the fees and methodology are subject to ongoing review.</p> |
| <p>Property:</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Policy:</p> | <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 2025/26. The Committee is being asked to consider the comments made in relation to the operators and vehicle licence fees received during the statutory consultation. The Committee is then asked to recommend a set of fees to full Council for adoption.</p> |

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| Implication | Commentary | | | |
|--|------------|---------|----------|---|
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | ✓ | | <p>No evident contribution to inequality</p> <p>The income received from licence applicants covers the cost of providing the statutory licensing function.</p> |
| 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 ongoing provision 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 |

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| Implication | Commentary | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Digital Services Impact: | | ✓ | | This information will be included on the Public Protection Partnership Website using existing resources. |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | ✓ | | | This work is business as usual within the service. |
| Core Business: | | ✓ | | This work is business as usual within the service. |
| 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, 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. | | | |

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The JPPC is required by the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) that set up the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) shared service, to recommend a draft set of fees and charges to each of the member Councils (Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire) annually. The proposed fees for 2025/27 were discussed at the JPPC meeting held on Monday, [11 October 2024](#) where it was proposed to increase the hourly rate that the fees are based on by 3% from £67per hour to £69 per hour. The increase was to proposed to offset the increase in the cost base arising predominantly to salary increases.
- 4.2 These fees were then presented to the Licensing Committee at the [04 November 2024 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.
- 4.3 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

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recommended to full Council for approval. The fees, with or without variation would come into effect on the 01 April 2025.

4.4 The proposed 2025/26 fees subjected to the statutory consultation are set out below:

Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicle Licence

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|---|--------------|
| Hackney carriage vehicle new / renewal | £310.50/£276 |
| Private hire vehicle new / renewal | £310.50/£276 |
| Private hire vehicle with dispensation / renewal | £172.50 |
| Temporary Vehicle Licence (issued up to 3 months Maximum) | £310.50/£276 |

Private Hire Operator Licence

| Number of vehicles | New | Renewal |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | £517.50 | £379.50 |
| 2 | £603.75 | £465.75 |
| 3 | £690 | £552 |
| 4 | £776.25 | £638.25 |
| 5 | £862.50 | £724.50 |
| 6 | £948.75 | £810.75 |
| 7 | £1035 | £897 |
| 8 | £1121.25 | £983.25 |
| 9 | £1207.50 | £1069.50 |
| 10 | £1293.75 | £1155.75 |
| 11 | £1380 | £1242 |
| 12 | £1466.25 | £1328.25 |
| 13 | £1552.50 | £1414.50 |
| 14 | £1638.75 | £1500.75 |
| 15 | £1725 | £1587 |
| 16 | £1811.25 | £1673.25 |
| 17 | £1897.50 | £1759.50 |
| 18 | £1983.75 | £1845.75 |
| 19 | £2070 | £1932 |
| 20 | £2156.25 | £2018.25 |
| 20+ | £2156.25 | £2018.25 |
| Variation to licence | £69 | £69 |

4.5 Who and How we Consulted

- The consultation period ran from 21 November 2024 to 19 December 2024.
- A public notice was placed in the Newbury Weekly News on the 21 November 2024.
- A consultation letter was posted to all Taxi and Private Hire Drivers and Private Hire Operators in the District.

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- A copy of the consultation was posted on the Public Protection Partnership website, on the West Berkshire Council Consultation Hub and in the reception area at the Market Street Offices on the 21 November 2024.
 - 1185 members of the community panel who have expressed an interest in the topic of roads and transport were contacted on the 22 November 2024.
 - The consultation was supported by a press release on 19 November 2024 and social media posts.
- 4.6 Six responses to the consultation were received. Of the responses two were from members of the community panel and four were from members of the trade. This was slightly lower than the eight responses received to last year's consultation.
- 4.7 Neither of the two community panel members objected to the increases with one stating that they would condone the increases and the other stating that the Council should recover their costs albeit that they did caution the possible impact on fares.
- 4.8 All trade responses objected to the increase and one in objecting requested that the fees be frozen for the forthcoming year. The responses are set out in Appendix A to the report.
- 4.9 In considering the responses Members are asked to consider the following:
- The service should be cost neutral and operate at no cost to the taxpayer. The resourcing of the service has been amended to reflect the falling levels of income. The Service, like all businesses, has been affected by rising salary, supplies and services costs.
 - The hourly rate set at the October JPPC meeting included an increase of 3% as was explained at the time was largely due to the increase in the cost base of the service.
- 4.10 As objections have been received as was previously agreed the objections have been brought to this Committee for discussion prior to the Committee making a recommendation on the proposed fees to full Council.

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 – Outcome of the Consultation Document.

Background Papers:

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

Subject to Call-In:

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Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: All

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