
Licensing Fees and Charges 2026/27

Committee considering report:	Licensing Committee
Date of Committee:	03 November 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tom McCann
Report Author:	Moira Fraser
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Licensing Committee about the Public Protection Partnership's Fees and Charges which were proposed by the Joint Public Protection Committee at its meeting on the 06 October 2025. Each partner Council is required to review the fees and charges on an annual basis. **Appendix A** details the fees and charges for 2026/27 proposed for the Public Protection Service.
- 1.2 To consider the proposals for the statutory consultation associated with the fees and charges for private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees.

2 Recommendations

The Licensing Committee:

- 2.1 Is informed about the 2026/27 fees and charges detailed in Appendix A
- 2.2 Agrees that the fees for Private Hire Operators and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle licence fees are subjected to the statutory consultation period as described in [paragraph 4.9](#)

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The costs of producing this report and running the consultation exercise will be met from within the existing Public Protection Partnership budgets.</p> <p>Discretionary fees and charges relating to licences and registrations are based on cost recovery, and should they not</p>

	reflect the cost of providing the service, there is a risk of generating a surplus or deficit.
Human Resource:	There are no HR implications associated with the production of this report.
Legal:	<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>
Risk Management:	The fees are potentially subject to legal challenge. It is therefore important the fees and methodology are subject to ongoing review.
Property:	None
Policy:	The Joint Public Protection Committee is required every autumn to propose a budget to partner authorities. This includes proposals in relation to discretionary fees and charges.

	<p>It is not the role of the Licensing Committee to set the fees for 2026/27. The Committee is being asked to consider the fees prior to them being considered by Executive and Council. The Committee may amend the proposals and put forward alternative fees for consideration., however as fees are set on a cost recovery basis any reductions may need to be covered by a subsidy. The fees, with the exception of the private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees would be subject to the Council's budget consultation process. The private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees have a separate statutory consultation process that must be adhered to.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Environmental Impact:		x		<p>The service plays a significant role in the protection of the environment including air quality, land contamination, planning considerations and enforcement of green energy claims. The setting of fees on a cost recovery basis will help to maintain capacity in this area.</p> <p>The Council has previously agreed to the introduction of a subsidy for hybrid and electric hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.</p>
Health Impact:		x		<p>A significant number of the Partnership's Service Priorities relate to protecting and improving health. These include safe and healthy food chain, safety in the workplace, protecting consumers from fraud, improved living environment, protecting the environment and protecting animal welfare.</p> <p>The setting of fees on a cost recovery basis should continue to have a positive impact on the health of residents and visitors to West Berkshire.</p>
ICT Impact:		X		There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.
Digital Services Impact:		X		The consultation will be published on the Council's website and the PPP website.
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		This work is business as usual within the service.
Core Business:		X		This work is business as usual within the service.
Data Impact:		X		Not applicable.

Consultation and Engagement:

The fees for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators will be subject to statutory consultation. All other fees and charges will be subjected to any corporate consultation processes.

4 Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Joint Public Protection Committee (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.
- 4.2 It is noted that a significant number of fees within the licensing field are set by Government Regulation and cannot therefore be changed by the Council. These are identified in green (statutory fees) on the fee schedule at **Appendix A**.
- 4.3 Members are asked to note that a significant proportion of the statutory fees have not been uplifted for many years whilst costs have been rising significantly for the Service. These statutory fees will be adjusted in year if any variations are made to legislation. It should be noted that in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 fees have not been increased since 2005 and Gambling Act 2005 charges have not increased since 2007 which has been a significant contributor to the gap between costs and income and are now over 70% behind inflation in the same period.
- 4.4 Discretionary fees are calculated based on the time taken to complete the activity multiplied by the hourly rate. This hourly rate incorporates a range of factors including the wide variety of council support service costs, staffing and associated costs, democracy and governance, policy development, contracts, systems and the necessary training to maintain a competent workforce. The support service recharges have increased by 35% since the hourly rate was originally calculated and this increase has now been factored into the new hourly rate.
- 4.5 In 2021/22 the full cost of the service, including internal support service re-charges (as per Council budget build processes) and the current establishment lists were updated which resulted in a new rate of £59 p/h and these rates were retained for 2022/23. The hourly rate was increased to £64p/h for 2023/24, £67 for 2024/25 and £69p/h in 2025/26.
- 4.6 For the financial year 2026/27 the proposed hourly rate has been rounded to £74 p/h. This is an inflationary increase of 7.2% in the cost base which includes the increase in cost base from salary related costs (including those not budgeted for in the 2025/26 hourly rate as a result of the higher than budgeted for pay settlement), National Insurance contribution increases along with support service recharge increases.
- 4.7 At the July meeting Members agreed that the three-year subsidy scheme for electric and hybrid vehicles adopted at the 2022 Executive meeting would not be renewed. The scheme will therefore close on the 31 March 2026.
- 4.8 Animal establishment fees will incorporate the costs of inspections conducted on our behalf by the City of London. At the time of writing next year's fees have not been

notified but will be incorporated in due course. Any veterinary fees incurred as part of animal licensing will also be recharged at cost.

- 4.9 The Council is required to undertake a statutory consultation in respect of the hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and private hire operator's fees. It is proposed that:
- a) the fees for Private Hire Operators and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle licence fees are subjected to the statutory consultation period from 06 November 2025 to 04 December 2025.
 - b) a public notice pertaining to the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators fees be placed in the Newbury Weekly News.
 - c) a consultation letter is posted to all Taxi and Private Hire Drivers and Private Hire Operators in the District.
 - d) a copy of the consultation is posted on the Public Protection Partnership website, on the West Berkshire Council Consultation Hub and in the reception area at the Market Street Offices.
 - e) If no objections are received, the charges for operators and vehicle licence fees be included in the February 2026 Executive and Council papers for approval; or if objections are received they be considered by the Licensing Committee at the meeting on 19 January 2026 and any changes be recommended to full Council for approval.
- 4.10 The proposed fees were discussed at the Joint Public Protection Committee meeting on the 06 October 2025. The Committee were supportive of the proposals set out in that report and they are reflected in Appendix A.

5 Proposals

- 5.1 The Licensing Committee is asked to note the proposed fees and comment on the statutory consultation process.
- 5.2 The Council is required to undertake a statutory consultation in respect of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operator's fees and the proposed mechanism and timescales are set out in paragraph 4.9 for Members to consider and approve.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 None. It is a requirement of the Inter Authority Agreement for the JPPC to consider the fees and charges and make a recommendation to the individual authorities. There is a requirement to set fees and charges annually and there is a statutory requirement to undertake consultation on the proposed charges for operators and vehicle licence fees.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are asked to note the proposed fees and charges and the consultation proposals and agree a way forward.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27

Background Papers:

Joint Public Protection Committee Report (06 October 2025) can be found here: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Joint Public Protection Committee on Monday 6 October 2025, 7.00 pm](#)

Subject to Call-In:

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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