

Name	Vehicle/Driver/PHO Licence Number	Summary of Comments
Bill Annetts, Kenikabs	DD 2032/PHO37	Mr Annetts does not oppose the proposed increase of £2, but would like to bring a variety of factors to the Committee's attention. Firstly, the price for a renewal and a new plate are somewhat different, and he believes this needs to be rectified. Relating to taxi plates and fittings, he notes that there is a charge for individual pieces – with a new plate you get these pieces, but with a renewal you don't (except for 4 locking tabs). Consequently, he believes this amounts to a gross overcharge to the trade over many years, and ought to be rectified with a repayment.
Cliff Verrall, Four Oaks Cars	HC 860	Mr Verrall is concerned about the increase in prices, due to the impact of Covid-19 on his company – business is down 80%. Mr Verrall would like the price rises to be reconsidered due to the current situation.
Dave Roach	DD2299/PHO2	Mr Roach finds it difficult to believe that a price rise is being considered, and feels it is a 'stab in the back', due to the local taxis and private hires losing income as a result of Covid-19. Mr Roach cannot see the justification for the licences being more expensive in West Berkshire than in other parts of the country, for example the cost in comparison to paperwork. He argues the reasoning of the cost reflecting the time taken to do the paperwork and produce the licence does not make sense, when comparing to Basingstoke.
Francis De La Cruz	PHO16	Mr De La Cruz thinks the price increase is not fair during the Covid-19 pandemic, because he has lost a lot of clients.
Graham Cox, Excel Executive Chauffeurs Ltd	PHO97	Mr Cox has the following observations: 1) He does not feel that the Committee will pay attention to his observations, but would like to make them regardless. 2) There are a lot of members of the private hire and taxi industry who are currently barely surviving as they don't qualify for any grant or subsidy payment on offer. 3) Although he has no major objection to the increase in vehicle fees, he feels that it is unreasonable under the current circumstances. 4) He would like to see the thought process behind the increase in operator's fees, both in light of the current circumstances and how a 3.25% increase is reasonable when the current rate of inflation is less than 1%.

		<p>5) He does not understand how the Licensing Department thinks the fee increase is fair, when the service the trade receives from them is 'abysmal'. He explains this comment through examples of the service he has received, stating that an incorrect renewal notice was sent out by officers, and consequently the wrong amount was paid and the operator licence was delayed. He also states that a policeman commented on his private hire licence, saying it looked like a laminated photo copy with a poor photo and no council crest on.</p> <p>6) Mr Cox believes that the Licensing Department should be audited as he has encountered many issues. He also suggests that the excuse of the department working harder as a result of the pandemic is not acceptable – if staff are working remotely then he sees no problem, and if they aren't then the trade is not receiving the service it has paid for.</p>
Jennie Harrison	Plate 613	<p>Ms Harrison would like to make the Committee aware of how little money she is currently taking home at the moment, due to people not travelling like usual (eg pubs, clubs, airports etc). For example, she was at the rank from 08:45 and didn't pick up a job till gone 13:00, and made £3.60 from it.</p> <p>She struggles to understand how the fees have increased so much, particularly as this is another rise within a year – she argues that drivers cannot afford it, and are struggling to pay all the fees that putting a taxi on the road entails, in light of all the restrictions and the impact this has had on taxi usage.</p> <p>Furthermore, she would like the Committee to consider waiving the fee for the plate this year, particularly in light of another year of restricted earning potential. She would like to draw the Committee's attention to a recent Meridian News piece, where a Newbury taxi driver was interviewed and explained her dire financial situation. Ms Harrison emphasises that a little help from the Council would go a long way, for example by renewing their plates without fee for this year. She also mentions how a lot of taxi drivers have had to hand back plates that they cannot afford, and suggests that by the end of 2021, there will be fewer taxi drivers unless support is provided.</p> <p>Ms Harrison has also contacted Laura Farris MP to express these concerns.</p>
John B's Taxi / Private Hire	PHO35	<p>This company strongly disagrees with the price rise, as their business is on its knees. The takings are down 80%.</p>

Junaid Ahmed	PHV102	Mr Ahmed is not in favour of the increase, and would like to feedback that the Committee should not increase the prices.
Kevin Hauxwell	PHO159	Mr Hauxwell would like to note that the prices are being put up while taxi drivers are struggling. He would also like to know if he fees are being put up for school runs, so they can pay for the increase as well, instead of 'filling your pockets all the time'.
Kirtkey Nisbett	DD2307/HC 567	<p>Mr Nisbett feels that due to the Covid-19 situation and subsequent lockdowns, the decision regarding the price increase should be suspected for at least 6 months. They argue that this will allow the vaccination programme to become established, and consequently the population ought to return to some normality, including travelling outside.</p> <p>The decreasing opportunities as a result of lockdown / tier 4 have had a detrimental effect on incomes. For example, they suggest that the Council itself has been effected with offering service delivery and raising internal fiscal incomes. They suggest that this reflects the same situation that many West Berkshire inhabitants are facing, and consequently raising fees is not appropriate at this specific time.</p>
L A Miah	DD2156	<p>Mr Miah would like to let the Committee know that that work has been very quiet since March 2020, and consequently they do not agree to the increase in fees. They also point out that West Berkshire fees are more expensive than Wokingham's, and suggest that the fees need to be looked into and considered. They would also like the Committee to consider how the town has been empty, and most company employees are working from home.</p>
Martyn Benson, Ave Cabs Ltd	DD2225	Mr Benson feels that the suggestion to increase prices is badly timed, especially with other local authorities offering reduced fees and support to the trade due to the lack of work and lockdowns. Mr Benson states that trade is down roughly 85% in West Berks, and that most drivers are just trying to survive.
Patrik Beck	PHV197 (on hold) PH477/DD2236	Mr Beck strongly opposes any proposed fees and charges increases – he finds it disgraceful that the Committee is trying to increase fees in such gard times. Mr Beck would like the Committee to know that since March 2020, taxi trade has

		dropped below 15%, and there are government schemes to support sole traders, as well as finance and insurance companies offering payment holidays to help taxi and private hire trade get through the pandemic. He states that the Committee should be ashamed of themselves, and asks if the next thing they're going to do is steal food from the homeless.
Peter Chemaly, Cabco (Objection on the behalf of himself and the 66 licenced vehicles on the Cabco fleet).	PHO128	Mr Chemaly would like to advise of his extreme objection to the increases tabled, and finds it almost unbelievable that the Council is considering these measures when the entire industry is struggling to survive.
Peter Chemaly, Personal	DD2050	Mr Chemaly is disgusted that Licensing are thinking of increasing fees during the pandemic, as the trade is already on its knees, and the fee increase would be putting another nail in its coffin. He suggests that this behaviour is despicable, particularly as they have not had an increase since 2013, and are trading way below the minimum wage limit (suggesting that some licencees are not even taking home £20 per day). Mr Chemaly suggests that the trade is the 'cash cow' which has funded Council salary increases over the last 8 years, and is frustrated that he does not get a reply to numerous emails or a consultation about an increase to the trade, and states that he feels ignored. Finally, Mr Chemaly would like to emphasise how disgusted he feels, and how opposed he is to an increase in fees.
Richard, Theale Taxis	PHO17	This company has no concerns with regards to the proposed fees.
Richard Williams	DD2080	Mr Williams states that the increase in fees will have a huge impact, as due to the pandemic there is hardly any work available – he would appreciate if the Committee would look at this. Furthermore, he states that they have not had a meter fare increase for around 8 years.
Walter O'Brien, Cabco (Objection on the behalf of himself and the 66 licenced vehicles on the Cabco fleet).	PHO128	Mr O'Brien would like to advise of his extreme objection to the increases tabled, and finds it almost unbelievable that the Council is considering these measures when the entire industry is struggling to survive.