

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES 2021/2022

Licensing Committee - 5th January 2021

Report of: Chief Officer, Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For consideration and decision

Key Decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer: Susan Lindsey Ext. 7491

Recommendation to Licensing Committee:

That the Licensing Committee recommend that the fee levels as set out in Appendix A to the report are appropriate for consultation with the taxi trade.

If, following consultation, there are no adverse comments to the proposed levels the recommendation is that the proposed fees and charges are implemented from 1st April 2021

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty and ensure that the 'taxi licensing' service remains self-financing, in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The taxi licensing service is required to be self-financing and the proposed increases to fees will ensure this is maintained.
- 2 Careful monitoring of income and expenditure has been carried out over the current financial year and the income from licence fees and associated costs, together with expenditure has been in accordance with the objectives laid out in the budget plan. There are minimal changes to the fees this year due to efficiency savings that have been made within the Licensing Partnership. Only an inflationary increase of 2.5% is proposed.
- 3 The type of tasks involved in taxi licensing applications include assistance to the applicant, checking of an application upon receipt, processing the application. Once processed determining the licence or arranging a hearing and holding a hearing, notification of the decision, preparing and issuing the licence, update the records/register, appeal preparation and holding an appeal hearing. Compliance tests of drivers, vehicles and operators, training

of Officers and Members has also been included, as well as the cost of consumables.

- 4 In line with the new Statutory Guidance issued by the Department of Transport, drivers, will be encouraged to sign up to the DBS online update service at an annual cost to them of £13. This will ease the checking process undertaken by the Licensing Team, although this has now been increased from a 3 year check to a 6 monthly check for each driver. The introduction of an 'admin' fee will cover the processing cost of any checks that need to be undertaken manually.
- 5 In future vehicle proprietors will pay for their 6 monthly MOT and inspections direct to the garage. This removes the administrative burden of re-charging these fees once collected by the Licensing Team.
- 6 The Licensing Partnership will email those Hackney Carriage Proprietors, Private Hire Operators and Drivers where we have their email addresses to advise them of the proposed fees. Should adverse comments be received regarding the fees a further Licensing Committee meeting will be held to provide them the opportunity to make comment. A Notice will also be available on the Council's website.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

If the Licensing Committee were minded not to approve these fees the Council would not be able to meet the Council's Service and Budget Plan or ensure the Taxi Licensing Service was self-financing.

Key Implications

Financial

The cost of licence fees takes into account the need to maintain a 'self financing' position for the service.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Should parts of industry believe the authority's fees are at a level which is greater than the costs of the statutory functions then it would be open to them to undertake a 'judicial review proceeding'. Should this arise, the authority would need to evidence how it arrived at the fee levels to demonstrate that they have been calculated on a cost recovery basis only.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices

Appendix A - Table of proposed 2021 - 2022 fees

Appendix B - Table of current 2020 - 2021 fees

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services