

Cabinet Member for City Services

5 December 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Streetscene & Regulatory Services

Ward(s) affected:

Not applicable

Title:

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fee Review 2022 – Taxi Licensing Mini Review

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

A fee review was undertaken on 12 January 2022 to address the charges made for the processing and issuing of licences to drivers and operators to reflect the changes and associated costs.

This review resulted in an increase of Driver, Vehicle and Operator fees to reflect the reduction in administrative staff and the new role to provide support across the service.

Following this, a further review of fees has been undertaken to reflect staffing, the number of licences issued and current costs. The taxi trade on the 23 August 2022 had a substantial increase in the maximum amount of taxi fares that they can charge the public which will offset the proposed increases in fees.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- (A) approve, subject to consideration of any comments received, the proposed fee changes detailed in Appendix A;
- (B) authorise the Director of Streetscene & Regulatory Services to make the necessary arrangements to advertise the applicable proposed fee variations;
- (C) note that if any formal objections are received in response to the statutory notice that a further report will be presented on the 8 February 2023.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix A – Proposed fee changes

Background papers:

None

Other Useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fee Review 2022 – Taxi Licensing Mini Review

1. Information / Background

- 1.1. Section 53(2) and section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that the City Council may charge as fees the reasonable cost of administering and enforcing the hackney carriage and private hire licensing function. The fees charged by the Taxi Licensing Office are intended to enable the service to operate on a self-financing basis.
- 1.2. A review of fees was carried out in 2021/22 and before that in 2019, which involved assessing the resources used for each activity represented by a fee. Any increased costs to taxi licensing since 2022 have been managed within available resources.
- 1.3. On the 23 August 2022 the taxi trade had a substantial increase in the maximum amount of taxi fares that they can charge the public, which will offset the proposed increases in fees.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- (A) approve, subject to consideration of any comments received, the proposed fee changes detailed in Appendix A;
- (B) authorise the Director of Streetscene & Regulatory Services to make the necessary arrangements to advertise the applicable proposed fee variations;
- (C) note that if any formal objections are received in response to the statutory notice that a further report will be presented on the 8 February 2023

It is proposed to increase charges for the fees as indicated in the tables below;

Licence Fee	Current Charge		Proposed Charge		Increase	
	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire
	£	£	£	£	£	£
New Applicant Driver Licence	605	540	675	595	70	55
Driver Renewal	285		315		30	
Additional Driver Licence	285		315		30	
Driver Re-Grant	305		335		30	
New Vehicle	230		255		25	
Vehicle Renewal	200		220		20	
Vehicle Re-Grant	220		240		20	
Vehicle Transfer	20		30		10	
Vehicle Registration Change	30		40		10	
New & Renewal Operator	2000		2200		200	
Operator Re-Grant	2040		2245		205	

A detailed breakdown of these is attached at Appendix A

Ancillary Fees	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Increase
	£	£	£
DBS/DVLA Enquiry	60.00	65.00	5.00
Hackney Carriage Road Knowledge Test	50.00	55.00	5.00
Driver Training Course (initial applicants only)	100.00	110.00	10.00
3 Yearly Driver Refresher Training (Mandatory)*	50.00	55.00	5.00
Vehicle MOT Inspection	55.00	60.00	5.00
Vehicle MOT Inspection (re-test)	27.50	30.00	2.50

There would be no change to any other licences and charges.

The above changes are summarised in Appendix A.

These fees will be reviewed annually.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

There is ongoing communication with Unite Union, the body that represents the hackney carriage and private hire trade in Coventry.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. If this report is approved, the proposed 2022 changes in drivers' licence fees and vehicle tests/re- tests will be advertised in the Coventry Telegraph on the 9 December 2022. Any objections and the results of the survey received can be considered at your meeting on the 8 February 2023. If no objections are received, the proposed fees will come into force on the 9 January 2023.

5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer

5.1. Financial implications

The proposed fee structure has been designed to enable the continued operation of the Taxi Licensing Office on a self-financing basis. Annual reviews of both fees and staffing levels will be undertaken alongside any further legislative changes and financial considerations. Any shortfall in licensing income during the implementation period will be managed within existing resources. Fee revisions are explained in section 2 with a detailed list of proposed fee changes shown in Appendix A.

5.2. Legal implications

Under section 53(2) and section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the City Council can only charge a level of fees which is sufficient to cover the reasonable costs of administering and enforcing the hackney carriage and private hire licensing function.

The 1976 Act lays down a statutory procedure for varying fees for Hackney Carriage Proprietors (i.e. vehicle) licences, Private Hire Vehicle licences and Private Hire Operators' licences. This procedure involves giving public notice of the proposed changes and a 28-day objection period. If objections are made, these must be considered by the Committee

before the proposed fees, relating to those types of licences, can be implemented.

The above statutory procedure does not apply to varying fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers' licences. However, it is considered simpler and fairer if the whole proposed fee table including drivers' licence fees, is advertised and the trade or public are given an opportunity to object to any item on the proposed fee table.

The issue of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire licences and the amount of any charge for their issue is excluded from being an 'executive function' by Regulation 2(6) and Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Ensuring that the public are safe by assessing drivers are fit and proper and vehicles safe.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Ensuring that established procedures are followed.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA

Not applicable

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

Mick Coggins, Senior Licensing & Enforcement Officer

Directorate:

Streetscene & Regulatory Services Directorate

Tel and email contact:

024 7683 2183 Taxi.Licensing@coventry.gov.uk Enquiries should be directed to the above

person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Andrew Walster	Director of Streetscene & Regulatory Services	Streetscene & Regulatory Services	21/11/2022	24/11/2022
Lara Knight	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law & Governance	21/11/2022	22/11/2022
Sarah Elliott	Head of Fleet and Waste Management	Streetscene and Regulatory Services	21/11/2022	21/11/2022
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Cath Crosby	Lead Accountant – Business Partner	Financial Management	21/11/2022	23/11/2022
Legal: Syeda Ahmed	Regulatory Barrister	Law & Governance	21/11/2022	23/11/2022
Members: Cllr Hetherton	Cabinet Member for City Services		21/11/2022	24/11/2022

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licensing Proposed Fee Structure 2022 – Proposed Fee Increases

Drivers both Hackney Carriage (HC) and Private Hire (PH)

Cost for New Applicant's Driver Licence

	Current cost		Proposed cost	
	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire
Application	85	85	95	95
DBS / DVLA Cost	60	60	65	65
Driver Training	100	100	110	110
Road Knowledge Test (HC only)	50	-	55	-
Driving / wheelchair assessment	90	70	100	75
Licence (3 year)	225	225	250	250
Total	£610	£540	£675	£595

Cost for Driver Licence Renewal

	Current cost	Proposed cost
DBS / DVLA Cost	60	65
Licence (3 year)	225	250
Mandatory CSE Refresher Training	50	55
Total	£335	£370

Cost for Additional Driver Licence (where a driver already has a HC or PH licence and requires the other licence PH or HC in addition)

	Current cost	Proposed cost
DBS / DVLA Cost (only if within 6 months of current licence expiring)	60	65
Additional Licence (3 year)	225	250
Total	£285	£315

Cost for Driver Licence Re-Grant (grant licence within 6 months of licence expiring)

	Current cost	Proposed cost
DBS / DVLA Cost	60	65
Licence (3 year)	245	270
Mandatory CSE Refresher Training	50	55
Total	£355	£390

Vehicles both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire

Cost for New Vehicle Licence

	Current cost	Proposed cost
Licence	230	255
Taxi Test	55	60
Total	£285	£315

Cost for Vehicle Licence Renewal

	Current cost	Proposed cost
Vehicle Licence	200	220
Taxi Test	55	60
Total	£255	£280

Cost for Vehicle Licence Re-Grant (grant licence within 90 days of licence expiring)

	Current cost	Proposed cost
Vehicle Licence	220	240
Taxi Test	55	60
Total	£275	£300

Operators

Cost for Operators (New and Renewal)

	Current cost	Proposed cost
Operator's Licence	2000	2200
Total	£2000	£2000

Cost for Operators Re-Grant of Licence (Grant licence within 6 months of licence expiring)

	Current cost	Proposed cost
Operator's Licence	2040	2240
Total	£2040	£2240

N.B. – DBS's may be requested by the Taxi Licensing Office at anytime and the new pricing will be as in the above tables. As of the 26 January 2023 licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers will be required to undertake six-monthly DBS's unless they have subscribed to the DBS Update Service.