

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Licensing and Enforcement Committee	Date:	12 December 2023
Subject:	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees and Charges 2024/2025		
Report Of:	Corporate Director		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Proposed fees		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To determine the level of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences fees for 2024/2025.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Licensing and Enforcement Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** to:-
- 2.2 Approve the proposed hackney carriage and private hire licence fees shown in Appendix 1 for a 28-day public consultation as required by Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.3 If no objections are received within 28 days of publication of the notice that the proposed increase to the fees and charges for hackney carriage and private hire licences will come into effect from 1 April 2024.
- 2.4 If objections are received within the 28 days, then the objections will need to be considered at the March 2024 meeting of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing fees are set locally by the Council.
- 3.2 Legislation permits the Council to set vehicle and operator licence fees to cover the whole or part of:-

- the cost of carrying out inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to determine whether any such licence should be granted or renewed.
- the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands;
- any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

3.3 Where the fee exceeds £25, then a 28-day public notice of the proposed fee must be advertised within which time any person may object to the variations.

3.4 Where objections are received, the Council must then consider the objections before determining the fee level and setting a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date.

3.5 The effect of the legislation is that the service must not generate a “profit” to the Council. The fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing were last changed in 2016 when they were increased by 3%.

3.6 In light of the impact of the Pandemic, Members determined not to apply any increase to the fees in recognition of the impact on the trade.

3.7 As the fees and charges had not seen an increase since 2016 it is proposed that a 2% increase would apply to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver, vehicle, and Private Hire operator fees for the financial year 2024/2025. The proposed and current fees can be seen in Appendix 1.

3.8 The only fees that have seen a significant increase is the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Knowledge tests. The fee for these tests has not increased for over ten years and the proposed fee is needed to reflect the cost to the service for undertaking these tests.

3.9 At the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade meeting held on 22nd November 2023, Officers engaged with members of the trade and put forward the proposed 2% increase to the driver, vehicle and operator fees and also the increases to the knowledge tests. The trade members who attended the meeting thought that the proposed increase was reasonable and would only be a small increase to their licence fees.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 The review has found it necessary to increase the fees for the financial year 2024/2025 due to inflationary pressures, however the council also recognises the economic pressure on licence holders and business, so have attempted to keep the increase to a minimum and below that of current inflationary rises.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 There are no ‘Environmental’ implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The fees and charges are reviewed to ensure that they are set at an appropriate level, to support the recovery of the cost associated with providing the service. It is therefore proposed to apply an increase of 2% for 2024/2025.
- 6.2 To propose no changes or reductions to the existing fees.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 Reasons for the key changes are provided within paragraphs in 3.7 and 3.8.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 If members approve the proposed fees, then a notice will be placed in the local newspaper.
- 8.2 Licensing Officers will consult with members of the wider trade via a text message to all drivers and sending an email to all licensed Private Hire Operators. A copy of the notice will also be placed on Gloucester City Council's website.
- 8.3 If no objections are received within 28 days, then the proposed fees will come into effect on 1 April 2024.
- 8.4 If objections are received then members of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee will consider them at the March 2024 Committee meeting.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The fee levels are set to ensure costs of issuing, administering and enforcing licences can be recovered.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 There is no statutory duty on the Council to consult when setting or revising licensing fees, except for those fees relating to hackney carriage, private hire vehicles and operators' licences.
- 10.2 As the proposal being put forward is to increase fees and charges in respect of the hackney carriage, private hire vehicles and operators' licences, the Council is required by section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, to advertise any proposed variation by publishing a notice in a local newspaper. This notice must provide a period of not less than 28 days for people to raise objections to the proposed variations to the fees.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 To minimise the risk of challenge to the setting of fees and charges, they are designed to meet but not exceed, the cost the Council reasonably believes will be

incurred in the issuing of licences and the administration of the service.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

12.1 The screen stage considered risks to customers in the areas of gender, disability, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or community cohesion. therefore, a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

13.1 The overall aim of the licensing regime is public protection.

Sustainability

13.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

13.3 None

Background Documents:

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976