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Northumberland County Council

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Date: 13 December 2022

Members, please note the day and the time of the meeting.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL** on **TUESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2022** at **2.00 PM**.

Yours faithfully

R O'Farrell

Rick O' Farrell
Chief Executive

To Licensing & Regulatory Committee members as follows:-

**J Beynon, T Cessford, E Chicken, J Foster, B Gallacher, C Hardy (Vice-Chair),
C Humphrey, JI Hutchinson (Chair), S Lee, K Parry, C Seymour, A Sharp, M Swinbank
and A Wallace**



Rick O'Farrell, Interim Chief Executive
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AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 6)

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on Wednesday 26 October 2022, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

(Pages 7
- 10)

To receive for information the following Minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Subcommittees:

5 October 2022
17 November 2022

4. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column

in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.

- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

5. REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

5.1 Licensing Fees

(Pages
11 - 16)

To provide information to committee in relation to fees and charges for licences under the following legislation.

- The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018
- Zoo Licensing Act 1981
- Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013
- Dangerous Wild Animal Act 1976
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 in relation to Tattooing and piercing.

5.2 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees

(Pages
17 - 24)

To provide information to committee in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees and the consultation responses.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 15 February 2023.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied
9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Agenda Item 2

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Committee** held on Wednesday 26 October 2022 at 1.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor I Hutchinson
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Cessford
J Foster
B Gallacher
C Hardy
S Lee

K Parry
A Sharp
M Swinbank
A Wallace

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Bulman
T Hardy
D Wilson

Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Licensing Manager
Business Compliance and Public
Safety Manager

07. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beynon, Chicken, Seymour, and P Soderquest.

08. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on Wednesday 15 June 2022, as circulated be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair with the amendment that Councillor Cessford was in attendance.

Ch.'s Initials.....

09. SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Subcommittees held on 21 July and 5 October respectively, be received for information.

10. REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

10.1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy – Fire Extinguishers and First Aid Kits

Members agreement was sought for the consultation in respect of the removal of the requirements for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to carry fire extinguishers and first aid kits.

The current policy stipulated that standard conditions were attached to all licensed vehicles to contain fire extinguishers and first aid facilities. Although the conditions required the licence holder to ensure the equipment was within the vehicle, there had never been any requirement for them to be used or training undertaken. Northumberland was one of the only local authorities in the area to continue to stipulate those conditions.

Any changes to the policy would be subject to consultation which was proposed to commence on 1 November 2022 for 12 weeks.

(Councillor Foster joined the meeting at 1.35 pm).

Discussion took place on the implications of the removal of the equipment. Members were advised that the requirements were not compulsory and it was reiterated that any changes to the policy would be subject to the consultation.

Councillor Parry proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Wallace.

When put to the vote, 7 members voted in favour of the proposal and 1 member voted against.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and consultation commence with the relevant bodies and stakeholders in respect of removing conditions that hackney carriage and private hire vehicles must carry fire extinguishers and first aid kits.

10.2 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees

Members were provided with information in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees.

The current fees were listed on page 18 of the report. A table showing the current fees and the current cost of administering licences was circulated to the committee.

Members were informed that the Council could recover the cost of the granting of hackney carriage or private hire licences, a fee it considered reasonable with a view to recovering the cost of issue and administration of licences.

Licence fees had last been amended in 2018.

For private hire and hackney carriage vehicles and private hire operators, the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act required that if the Council resolved to amend fees, they shall be published in at least one local newspaper, setting out the fees proposed and specifying the period, within which objections could be made. The period of notice should be at least 28 days. If after 28 days of the notice, no objections have been received, the new fees would normally come into force the day after the close of representations. Where representations were received, the authority must make arrangements to consider the comments and make a final determination and agree a date of implementation.

It was envisaged that should the committee wish to amend the fees; this would be considered by the committee in December.

In response to comments/questions from members, the following information was given:-

There was no time scale for the review of fees, there had been no appetite to increase fees in the past, but it was now considered appropriate to review the fees.

Significant discussion took place including the cost of living; reduction of fees for the use of greener fuels; fees being brought in line with administration costs; subsidies in rural areas; increase in taxi fares; the cost of electric cars and the current increases in electric tariffs.

Some members agreed that costs should remain as they were due to the current cost of living.

In response to a question regarding the difference between the total current costs and the increase, it was advised that the difference was approximately £12,500.

Councillor Cessford proposed a motion that the fees remain the same, but be reviewed after 1 year.

As the proposal was not seconded, the motion fell.

Councillor Wallace proposed to accept the increases set out in the table regarding the current costs of administering licences, en masse. This was seconded by Councillor Hardy.

Councillor Foster asked if the proposer of the recommendation would be minded to take into account a discount for electric vehicles within the proposal.

Councillor Wallace stated that he would not amend his proposal.

Upon being put to the vote, 8 members voted in favour of the proposal and 2 member voted against.

RESOLVED that in the event that there are no objections, or representations received, members agree that:-

- the fees shall come into effect on the day following the close of the consultation period, details of which to be included in the public notice and
- agree that the Director of Housing and Public Protection, shall commence the consultation process at the earliest opportunity

10.3 Street Trading Policy

Members were requested to approve consultation in respect of the Council's Street Trading Policy.

One of the main issues encountered by officers was that the current policy did not facilitate the issuing of consents for one off trading.

Members were asked to agree consultation with relevant bodies and stakeholders in respect of the Street Trading Policy, particularly in the following areas:-

- Introduction of a daily consent application process and fee.
- Current list of exemptions to the application process and fee.
- A new requirement that applicants provide a DBS certificate with applications.

The policy had last been approved in 2015 and whilst there had been no significant changes to legislation, it was considered an appropriate time to update some areas of the policy.

Any changes to the policy would be subject to consultation and it was proposed that this commenced on 31 October 2022 for 12 weeks.

Councillor Cessford moved the proposal to approve the recommendation contained within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Lee and was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

Members agree consultation with the relevant bodies and stakeholders in respect of the Street Trading Policy with particular focus on the introduction of a daily consent application process and fee, current list of exemptions to the application process and fee and the introduction of a requirement that applicants provide a DBS certificate with applications.

11. NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory on Tuesday 20 December 2022, be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

LICENSING AND REGULATORY SUB-COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Subcommittee** held in **Conference Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF** on **Wednesday 05 October 2022** at **10.00 am**

PRESENT

Councillor J I Hutchinson
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Cessford	C Hardy
E Chicken (Reserve)	

OFFICERS

H Bowers	Democratic Services Officer
M Bulman	Lawyer, Legal Services
H Tait	Senior Licensing Officer

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Hutchinson be elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

- (a) that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Schedule 12(A) of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item 4, Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A

Ch.'s Initials.....

"information relating to any individual."

PART II

3. REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Case No. 05.10.22/440

The applicant was in attendance with his wife.

Introductions were made and the Chair explained the procedure to be followed.

The Senior Licensing Officer informed members that an application had been received which officers were unable to deal with under delegated powers.

The Subcommittee was asked to consider the application and the applicant's representations along with the written and oral report of the Senior Licensing Officer and relevant law and guidance policy to determine whether or not the applicant was a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. It was stated that the burden of proof rested upon the applicant and the standard of proof was the civil standard of proof.

The applicant and his wife submitted the case in support of his application and then answered questions from the Subcommittee.

Members of the Subcommittee retired to make their decision with the legal adviser and following this the applicant was advised:-

The Subcommittee has determined to **REFUSE** your private hire driver's licence as you are not considered to be a fit and proper person to hold a private hire driver's licence.

The Subcommittee's reasons for the decision were given verbally at the hearing and would be also provided in writing to the applicant after the hearing.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
LICENSING AND REGULATORY SUB-COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Subcommittee** held in **Conference Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF** on **Thursday, 17 November 2022** at **10.00 a.m.**

MEMBERS

Gallacher, B.
Hutchinson, J.I.

Swinbank, M. (Reserve)
Wallace, A.

OFFICERS

M. Bulman
T. Hardy
A. Todd

Lawyer, Legal Services
Licensing Manager
Democratic Services Officer

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor J. I. Hutchinson be elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

(a) that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as they involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Schedule 12(A) of the 1972 Act, and

(b) that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item	Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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4	Information relating to any individual.
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The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because of any information relating to any individual

PART II

3. REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Case No. 17.1.22/441

The applicant was in attendance.

Introductions were made and the Chair explained the procedure to be followed.

The Senior Licensing Officer informed members that an application had been received which officers were unable to deal with under delegated powers.

The Subcommittee was asked to consider the application and the applicant's representations along with the written and oral report of the Senior Licensing Officer and relevant law and guidance policy to determine whether or not the applicant was a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

The applicant submitted the case in support of his application and then answered questions from the Subcommittee.

Members of the Subcommittee retired to make their decision with the legal adviser.

Following this the committee determined to take no further action in respect of the licence, and reasons were given for the decision.

As the applicant had not returned to the room it was noted that the Subcommittee's reasons for the decision would be provided in writing after the hearing.



Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: LICENSING AND REGULATORY

DATE: 20TH DECEMBER 2022

TITLE OF REPORT

Licensing Fees

Report of Philip Soderquest, Director of Housing & Public Protection

Cabinet Member: Cllr Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder, Community Service

Purpose of Report

To provide information to committee in relation to fees and charges for licences under the following legislation.

- The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018
- Zoo Licensing Act 1981
- Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013
- Dangerous Wild Animal Act 1976
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 in relation to Tattooing and piercing.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- Note the content of the report and the revised fees as set out within Appendix 1.
- Consider and debate the proposals, following which, determine whether to agree the fees, with or without modification, all of which would come into effect on the 1 January 2023.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Enjoying & Connecting priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024

Key issues

The Licensing Service is responsible for the administration and enforcement of a number of licensing regimes, where the relevant legislation allows for a fee to be charged for the provision of those services and the granting of the licence.

It is acknowledged that whilst businesses have restarted post covid, that many will be subject to additional costs arising from the cost of living crisis, and that this will be viewed as an additional pressure.

The council however is equally impacted by those same cost pressures, with CPI at 10.1%, and to maintain service delivery it is necessary to increase current fees and charges, which in respect of what is being proposed is circa 9%.

It would normally be expected that fees would be reviewed on an annual basis, but due to the onset of Covid and impact on most businesses, this has not happened since 2019, so current fees are lower that would be expected at this time.

Appendix A contains the list of current fees and charges and the proposed new fees.

Where applications require a vet inspection any charge by the vet is not included within the fees and is recharged to the applicant in addition to the licence fee.

Implications

Policy	None
Finance and value for money	Any changes to fees will impact upon the income. However, it is expected that the licensing system will be cost recovery.
Legal	
Procurement	None
Human Resources	
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	None

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	
Carbon reduction	None
Health and Wellbeing	None
Wards	All

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Colin Horncastle

Author and Contact Details

Tasmin Hardy

Licensing Manager

Tasmin.hardy@northumberland.gov.uk

Appendix A

Licence Type		Current fee	Last reviewed	Proposed Fee
Providing or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00
	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Providing home boarding for dogs *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00
	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Providing day care for dogs *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00
	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Dog Breeding Establishment *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00
	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Hiring Out Horses *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00

	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Selling animals as pets *	Renewal application	£ 225.00	Oct-19	£248.00
	New application	£ 250.00	Oct-19	£275.00
Keeping or training animals for exhibition *	Renewal application	£ 240.00	Oct-19	£264.00
	New application	£ 240.00	Oct-19	£264 .00
Animal Licensing Further Fees *	Re-inspection fee	£ 75.00	Oct-19	£83.00
	Additional host licence fee	£ 80.00	Oct-19	£88.00
	Additional licensing activity fee	£ 229.00	Oct-19	£252.00
Tattoo/ Ear Piercing	Premises licence	£ 90.00	Aug-15	£99.00
	Personal licence	£ 55.00	Aug-15	£61.00
Scrap Metal	Site Licence	£ 650.00	Oct-13	£715.00
	Mobile Collector	£ 500.00	Oct-13	£550.00

Zoo licence *	1 species	£ 150.00	Aug-15	£165 .00
	2-5 species	£ 275.00	Aug-15	£303.00
	6+ species	£ 400.00	Aug-15	£440.00
Dangerous Wild Animal Act *	initial licence	£ 116.00	Aug-15	£250.00

*Vet fees charged in addition to licence fee.



Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: LICENSING AND REGULATORY

DATE: 20TH DECEMBER 2022

TITLE OF REPORT

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees

Report of Philip Soderquest, Director of Housing & Public Protection

Cabinet Member: Cllr Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder, Community Service

Purpose of Report

To provide information to committee in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees and the consultation responses.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- Note the content of the report and the revised fees as set out within Appendix 1.
- Consider and debate the proposals, following which, determine whether to agree the fees, with or without modification. (Note - There was typographical error in consultation documents in relation to the proposed fees for a 5 year operator's licence so it is recommended that no changes are made for those fees at this time.)
- Determine the date upon which the new fees, if agreed, will come into effect, which must be no later than the 8 February 2023.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Living and Enjoying priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024

Key issues

The Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 26th October 2022 agreed to a review of taxi hire and private hire licensing fee and requested that officers begin the formal consultation.

Statutory consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 – Section 70, including the placing of public notices in several local newspapers, and in addition, 1013 licence holders were notified by email of the proposed increases and invited to comment on the proposals.

The current and proposed fees are attached as Appendix A.

The consultation ran until 8th December and the responses are attached as appendix C.

Background

The Council may recover the cost of the granting of hackney carriage or private hire licences with a fee that they consider reasonable with a view to recovering the cost of issue and administration of the licences. In relation to vehicle licences the costs of enforcement may be included within the licence fees.

Licence fees for hackney carriage and private hire driver licences were last amended in 2018.

Licence fees for hackney carriage vehicles, private hire vehicles and private hire operators were last amended in 2015.

The decision was taken not to increase fees in 2020/21 due to the onset of covid and the impact this had on many businesses across Northumberland, including that of the Hackney and Private Hire sector.

It is acknowledged that whilst businesses have restarted post covid, that many will be subject to additional costs arising from the cost of living crisis, and that this will be viewed as an additional pressure.

It is clear from the consultation, which has generated 48 responses (Appendix A), a 4.7% return based upon the number of emails issued, that the proposed increases are not supported by the trade.

The council however is equally impacted by those same cost pressures, and to maintain service delivery it is necessary to increase current fees and charges, to

reflect those increased costs associated with service delivery, including utility, staffing and consumables.

For Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Private Hire Operators the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976, Section 70, requires that if the Council resolve to set/amend fees, they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice setting out the fees proposed, and specifying the period, within which and the manner in which objections to the variation can be made. The period of notice shall be at least 28 days. Although it is not legally required for drivers licences, it is considered best practice to adopt the same practices in respect of drivers licence fees and therefore we include these fees in the public notices.

Where no representations are received to the consultation the new fees would normally come into force the day after the close of representations. Where representations are received the authority must make arrangements to consider the comments and make a final determination and agree a date of implementation which is within 2 months of the end of the consultation period.

The Council may remit the whole or part of any fee chargeable in any case in which they think it appropriate to do so. Should the committee wish to delay the start of any changes to the licensing fees they may wish to remit the additional fees up to the start date.

Implications

Policy	None
Finance and value for money	Any changes to fees will impact upon the income. However, it is expected that the licensing system will be cost recovery.
Legal	
Procurement	None
Human Resources	
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None

Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	For some licence types there is a requirement for consultation
Carbon reduction	None
Health and Wellbeing	None
Wards	All

Background papers:

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Colin Horncastle

Author and Contact Details

Tasmin Hardy

Licensing Manager

Tasmin.hardy@northumberland.gov.uk

Current and Proposed Fees

Licence Type	Current Fee £	Proposed Fees £
Private or Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence for vehicles	226	241
Private or Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence for vehicles using "greener" fuels	204	241
Private Hire Operators Licence (1 year)	106	110
Private Hire Operators Licence (5 year)	502	502
Driver Licence (1 year)	78	85
Driver Licence (2 year)	112	122
Driver Licence (3 year)	146	159
Additional driver licence	30	34

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ID	Are you a Licence holder	What Licence do you hold?	Do you wish to object to the variation of the fees?	Additional comments
1	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Private Hire Operator;Private Hire vehicle;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	I find it very hard for you to justify these increases when the taxi trade are struggling so badly in these current circumstances. I myself employ 6 staff & it's getting harder & harder to make a living when everything is going up there will be a time when I become a single owner driver operator due to the fact I can't justify employing people. Please rethink your decision.
2	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
3	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	Increasing licensing fees at this moment in time is not appropriate... More money less services... Value for money at licensing is at an all time low... Why is there a proposed increase of 7% when the fare increase was not as high, we are still losing out because you gave the increase then you are now trying to impose a higher increase for your services, which may I add are awful. The taxi industry is being robbed blind by at Northumberland County Council, there is no help from anyone !
4	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	We got a 5% fare increase and this is a 7% increase I totally disagree with it
5	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	In times of financial uncertainty NCC do this!!!!!! You have removed the incentive to go green too. How stupid is that decision? You give us a measly 5% tariff increase then take it off us with these rises in licences. You are killing our trade
6	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;Private Hire vehicle;Private Hire Operator;	Yes	Raising the cost for licences when the licensing department can't deliver on the work load they have now doesn't seem the right thing to do. Licence renewals are months behind due to lack of staff.
7	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	I object to the rise of fee by 7% With no consultation or information sent out to the operators considering the fares went up a measly 5%. Where elsewhere gets between 15 & 20 % Do you think that all taxis should go and get private hire cars and charge what they want Considering phoenix has has put there fares up by 55% Now that is a fare increase worth of the service we provide And it's essential service and not a luxury
8	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	
9	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	
10	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	At a time of financial uncertainty the increases in outgoings are neither helpful or welcome to drivers infact they are a hindrance
11	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	I think this is an absolute disgrace. This trade has been decimated over recent years from covid to extreme fuel prices. You ignore our plea for a respectable price increase and hand out a pitiful 5% forcing larger firms the luxury of handing back all of there hackney carriage plates to become a private hire firm (phoenix) to no longer be price regulated and charging what they want, and now to add insult to injury and rub salt in the wounds you propose a 7% increase on our fees, DISGUSTING but this will probably be ignored anyway and you will do what you want as always so why waste the time asking us?
12	No	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	Increase in prices when it's a struggle to earn a good wage when fuel is sky high My private hire licence expired in February and was never renewed. The increase cannot be justified unless there is a dramatic improvement in the services provided by NCC. Unable to fulfil the commitments yet expect us to pay more for an inadequate service. Delays in issuing licences and lack of licensing knowledge is just a couple of issues. Service needs to improve.
13	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	You have put the prices up 7% but the tariffs only went up 5%!! Are you trying to bankrupt us all or put us out of business
14	Yes	Private Hire Operator;Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
15	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	
16	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Private Hire vehicle;Hackney Carriage vehicle;Private Hire Operator;	Yes	This industry needs help why not cut fees instead. Of trying to put more people on the scrap heap disgraceful
17	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	Like alot of things the taxi trade is literally on its
18	Yes	Private Hire Operator;	Yes	backside... it's disgusting
19	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;Private Hire vehicle;Private Hire Operator;	Yes	My objections relate to efficiencies within the licensing system. No value for money officer appointed A Taxi licensing budget would be an educational too which may help educate us licensees I would also value a statement to show how these rates are calculated It is not as simply as plucking figures out of thin air, and taxi licensing should be a separate item not including other licensing budgets TOTALLY OBJECT TO THESE PROPOSALS.
20	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	Especially because of the very poor service or total lack of service the Licensing Department provide and majority of drivers and operators feel as though we are being controlled by a committee/departement who have no clear understanding of the Taxi industry and trade.
21	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	What I will say is taxi businesses and all businesses need less red tape and costs more than ever now and charging taxis to go into Newcastle is another example of making life harder with no benefit to anyone.
22	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	I want to object to this although I'll probably be wasting my time as all usual consultations go through with always the same response that nobody objected to it so just to put this on record that I have objected to it so I hope I get a response saying as much
23	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	I would like to know how we can only be awarded 5% increase on the metre having a Hackney carriage vehicle and yet you want to put your fees up over 7% even more in cases of Green Fuel vehicles. Yet your policy is for everyone to change to Euro 6 and Electric vehicles so Northumberland can come with the banner that there carbon neutral by 2030 That's a complete joke in my eyes how is everyone supposed to be able to buy these vehicles when no one is making enough money to buy them. So in effect with the fuel prices going through the roof with no sign of it coming down everyone is feeling the pinch with the electric and gas bills going up there's a massive drop in footfall using taxis and yet you think it's a good idea to shaft us as well. Will we get a better service from the licensing department for the extra money? Will there be enforcement officers out on a night time catching private hire vehicles picking up off the streets? Using unlicensed cars unlicensed drivers Will we get our plates issued on time I think not So no I object to your un-fair price rises totally unfair and shouldn't even be proposed at this moment in time
24	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	This is totally unacceptable and with the cost of living going up on a daily basis, running costs etc going up this is just another nail in the coffin for the trade!!! We received 5% increase for the fares and now you are looking to put 7% on the cost of plates and drivers badges!!! So you give with one hand and take it straight back!!!! All money generated by taxi service is meant to be put back into the trade!!!! Can you explain where you have spent the money and what improvements you have made to help the trade!!!!
25	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	Increasing our fees for a poor service. Can't get test dates staff still working from home why?? So yes I don't agree with the increase.
26	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	5% meter increase was the fare rise you gave us Why have these costs risen by more than 5%?
27	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
28	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	
29	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	
30	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	Due to the increase in Fuel and Maintenance costs we have had a reduction in our wages by about 20-30%, yet we received a measly 5% increase in fares which was a pittance compared to increase in fuel from £1.30 per litre to £1.90 per litre as well as increase in Maintenance costs (e.g. engine oil has virtually doubled), I also ran an electric vehicle which saw a 60% increase in electricity costs, to the point I have had to replace a brand new vehicle as it was no longer viable to run. So I strenuously object to any increase in vehicle or driver licenses fees, in fact we should be getting a reduction in fees in the present climate. I have made several requests to licensing to discuss fares and other matters which appear to fall on deaf ears as they do not want to talk to anyone wanting to input 39 years of Taxi experience into taxi policies and we get roughshod into policies that are detrimental to the trade. Currently the average Taxi driver age in Morpeth is between 55-65, there are no new drivers coming into the trade so whats going to happen in the next 5-10 years when these drivers retire ? Licensing should be working with the trade to improve conditions NOT working against them to prevent new drivers wanting to come the trade because of draconian policies. Fully support these increases, in some respects the fees associated with being a hackney/private hire driver or vehicle owner could or should be higher. Note the 5 year operators licence should read E558, if its £158 I'll take two. At E892 for three years badges and vehicle licences that's less than 2 weeks work, out of 156 !
31	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	No	How can you justify an increase in fees in the present climate people in the taxi business are struggling to make a living with the cost of fuel and the general increase in the cost of living we have struggled for 3 years and have had a poxy 5 percent rise on meter prices no wonder people are packing the taxi trade in they can't afford to keep going Licensing should actually take a pay freeze at the moment because of the sub standard service being provided it takes two long for you to replace badges and plates stopping drivers from making a living it's been too much of you sitting in a comfort zone working from home this is not helping the trade as the drivers have been in the front line from day 1 and you have done nothing to help this increase is down to to pure greed on your part you can't justify an increase based on the crap service you have provided over the last few years it's not a concentration camp Our fares only increased 5% and I would have to travel 60 miles to have my meter changed,so 120 Mile round trip costing approx £25 in fuel and at least 3 hours lost earnings plus the cost of the Meter change. We are all struggling with the increase in running costs and the inconvenience and cost of having to go to Alnwick for tests which is a 60 mile round trip and at least 3 hours lost earnings. If the increase was to 'reintroduce services to Berwick then it would be money well spent. prices keep going up we will need a price incress on tariffs
32	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	
33	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
34	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
35	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	far to much that like not the right time at the moment to increase fees most owners including myself have taken a massive hit and loss of customers since covid and it still has not returned to pre covid levels it probably wont ever return to do that if these are raised it would have to be passed on to the customer which would probably mean even less customers
36	Yes	Private Hire Driver;Private Hire vehicle;Private Hire Operator;	Yes	
37	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	
38	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	I think an increase in licence prices should be waived at this time... I believe there is a shortage of taxi drivers at the minute ? .. and a lot of us are finding that it is less and less financially viable to be a taxi driver in these times...with the price of fuel and vehicles and insurance spiralling... I also think it may deter anyone wanting to become a taxi driver in the future ? Our tariffs are well down. As cost of living is so high. People aren't using taxis as much. An increase will force a lot of drivers out of a job including myself
39	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
40	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	No	
41	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;	Yes	
42	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
43	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	
44	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	The increase of over 10% for all renewals is high a 5% increase would be more acceptable
45	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Hackney Carriage vehicle;	Yes	Everything is getting to expensive and it should be cheaper as everything is done online now
46	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;	Yes	You have no financial reasons to increase the charges except to take more money for the same service. We are already facing problems with the cost of fuel so please try and validate the proposed increase. ?
47	Yes	Hackney Carriage Driver;Private Hire Driver;Private Hire vehicle;Private Hire Operator;	Yes	As a sole trader private hire driver, last year I paid £474 in licences to NCC and E55 in testing the vehicle. I think over £500/year is too costly as it is without putting licences up. As a business owner, diesel is up 15%, used car prices are up 27%, road tax has also increased. These are all large sums of money that I have to absorb as a loss, that taxi fares don't repay. Although fares have risen, there's a lot less custom due to the economic situation. I don't think it's a good idea putting license fees up until the economy starts to pick up.
48	Yes	Private Hire Driver;	No	

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