



# Northumberland

## County Council

COMMITTEE: LICENSING AND REGULATORY

DATE: 20<sup>TH</sup> 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**

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### **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 8<sup>th</sup> 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**

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

<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	For some licence types there is a requirement for consultation
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	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](mailto:Tasmin.hardy@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Current and Proposed Fees

<b>Licence Type</b>	<b>Current Fee £</b>	<b>Proposed Fees £</b>
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