
TITLE: TAXI LICENSING FEES - CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS

COMMITTEE: LICENSING COMMITTEE

DATE: 13 DECEMBER 2017

AUTHOR: SENIOR LICENSING OFFICER

[S198]

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider comments submitted to the taxi fee increase notice published on Monday 16 November.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Members consider the report, and the comment received in appendix 1, and
- (i) approve the fees (as proposed in the public notice) to come into effect immediately.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 11 October 2017 Members were presented a report outlining the annual licensing fees review. Having considered the report, Members resolved to increase the fees in line with the Officer recommendation. Furthermore, Members agreed to implement the driver fees immediately and authorised Officers to publish the required public notice under section 70 for vehicle and operator fees.
- 3.2 All licence holders (approximately 200 individuals) were advised of the fee increase, the reasons for it, and the consultation deadline date that they would need to observe if they wished to submit an objection. During the consultation period one objection was received (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.3 The proposed fees are part of the Licensing Authority's undertaking (agreed in 2015) to ensure that the licensing service reduces the budget deficit and becomes cost neutral over a five year period. No provision was built into this process to recover previous year's deficits; such was the extent of the deficit in those years.

4.0 OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are three main options available to Members:

- i. Members may reject the proposed increases – this will benefit the taxi trade, but will result in the Council failing in its attempts to reduce the licensing income deficit.
- ii. Members may defer the proposed increases – this will benefit the taxi trade, but will potentially result in the Council failing in its attempts to reduce the licensing income deficit, and is also likely to cause any future increase to fall out of sync with the other licence types.
- iii. Members may approve the fees, as per the Officers recommendation – this will not benefit the trade, but it will enable the Council to reduce the taxi licensing budget deficit, and reduce the burden on the general taxpayer.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If the proposals in this report are adopted it will amount to a £78 increase in licensing fees over those paid in 2016/17 by a person who holds a driver, vehicle and operator licence.
- 5.2 The proposed increase was agreed by Members following the consideration of a detailed report, and is the only option that will uphold the undertaking to become cost neutral over five years. The proposal is less than the increase some other licence types have had to absorb over the same period. Any reduction in the level of proposed fees will result in this timeframe being missed, and will create an extended burden on the general taxpayer.
- 5.3 Officer time has been required to deal with the consultation exercise, and Member time has been required to consider the comments received. These costs will come out of the Licensing Department's budget.
- 5.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed showing there is no adverse impact on the community if Members follow the Officer recommendations.

7.0 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1 Objector comment

Background Documents**Location****Contact Officer**

The Local Government
(Miscellaneous Provisions) Act
1976

Room SF208
The Grange,
Ely

Stewart Broome
Senior Licensing Officer
(01353) 616477

Town Police Clauses Act 1847

Existing Hackney Carriage and
Private Hire Guide.

Dept. for Transport – Taxi and
Private Hire Best Practice
Guidance 2010.