

**Report of the Assistant Director to the
General Licensing Regulatory Board
to be held on the 16 April 2025**

Fees and Charges Review

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members for the new hackney carriage and private hire drivers licence, hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and operator licence fees.

2. Background

A review of the hackney carriage and private hire drivers, operators and vehicle licence fees have not been carried out since 2014.

The Licensing team has recently been expanded to provide sufficient resource to enable the team to respond to requests for service and operate more proactively as public safety remains our top priority. This expansion has seen an increase in the number of pro-active and reactive compliance checks carried out in relation to driver, vehicle and operators.

Officers currently carry out detailed time monitoring which has been used to inform a full review of the licence fees.

Assumptions have been made as to the amount of work that the newly recruited officers in the team will spend on work related to hackney carriages and private hires licenses. These assumptions are based on the work carried out by currently employed officers and the time they spend on hackney carriage and private hire licences. As these assumptions have not yet been tested, full time

monitoring will continue to be carried out by all officers and the fees will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly in the future if necessary.

An assumption of the future number of licences issued is based on current numbers of licences issued. Whilst licences may be surrendered throughout the year, new applications will be received and so the overall numbers do not fluctuate too much therefore it is felt this is a representative figure to use.

It should be noted that the cost of enforcement against licensed drivers is not recoverable in fees and must be borne by the Council.

3. Current Position

Fees have been calculated to accurately reflect costs following changes to working practises and increases in staffing costs since the current fees were adopted in 2014.

The fees are based on the time taken to carry out relevant procedures and formalities.

4. Proposal

The Council is the Licensing authority for the purpose of hackney carriage and private hire licensing. Its functions and responsibilities in relation to fees and charges for taxi and private hire licenses are set out in section 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LG(MP)A 1976)

Schedule 1 of The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) (The Regulations) allocates responsibility for some of those fee setting functions to the Council.

Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to delegate those licensing functions which are allocated to it by virtue of the Regulations. The Council has delegated responsibility to the General Licensing Regulatory

Board (GLRB) under its Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution to set hackney carriage and private hire licences fees subject to it taking into account policy considerations of cabinet and or Council.

Section 70 of the LG(MP)A 1976 permits the Council to set vehicle and operator licence fees, but where this fee exceeds £25, under section 70(4) a public notice of the proposed fees must be advertised in a local newspaper circulating in the borough. The advertisement must advise where any objections to the fee changes can be lodged and must allow a period of at least 28 days from publication of the notice for objections to be lodged. If no objections are made or if all objections are withdrawn the proposed fees come into effect at the end of the 28-day period. Where objections are not withdrawn, the Council (i.e. GLRB) must then consider the objections before determining the fee level and setting a further date, not later than two months after the specified date, on which the new fees shall come into force.

In relation to drivers licence application fees, under section 53 of the LG(MP)A 1976 there is no statutory requirement to publicise any changes in the level of fees. However, as with the vehicle and operator licence fees, it is not uncommon to publish details of the proposed fees and provide for a period of 28 days from publication for any objections to the fees to be lodged with the Council. Any such objections will be considered by the Council (GLRB) before the proposed fees are finally approved.

Any application for a licence must be accompanied by a fee. The fee is set locally having regard to the guidance issued by the Home Office. In calculating fees, we have taken into account:-

- All the activity required for processing and granting a licence e.g. considering applications and assessing the suitability of the applicant.
- Staff costs associated with supporting the service.
- Support provided by other parts of the Council to the Licensing Team, e.g. Legal Services and other associated recharges.
- Carrying out inspections and ensuring compliance with the law

- Issuing the licence
- Management costs

Enforcement costs must be based on the principles of good regulation and set out in an open and transparent way. Fees cannot be used for enforcement action against drivers, as an economic deterrent or to raise funds.

The current fees and proposed fees are set out below:-

Licence	Duration	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Increase to Current Fees
Driver	1 Year	£137	£150	£13
	3 Year	£221	£240	£19
Operator	1 Year	£63	£126	£63
	5 Years	£127	£254	£127
Vehicle	1 year	£164	£180	£16

The fees set by other South Yorkshire Authorities are provided below for benchmarking information only. They are not as a consideration to base any decision against:-

Sheffield Council

Driver – 1 Year £223
 2 years £245
 3 Years £268

Vehicle - £212

Operator –

Type	Number of Vehicles	Cost to buy or renew licence
1 year	1 to 10	£531
	11 to 50	£664
	51 to 100	£1993
	101 to 250	£4650
	Over 250 vehicles	£6643
2 years	1 to 10	£1026
	11 to 50	£1282
	51 to 100	£3063
	101 to 250	£5840
	Over 250 vehicles	£8119
3 years	1 to 10	£1521
	11 to 50	£1900
	51 to 100	£4133
	101 to 250	£7030
	Over 250 vehicles	£9595
4 years	1 to 10	£2016
	11 to 50	£2518
	51 to 100	£5203
	101 to 250	£8220
	Over 250 vehicles	£11071
5 years	1 to 10	£2510
	11 to 50	£3137
	51 to 100	£6274
	101 to 250	£9411
	Over 250 vehicles	£12548

Rotherham Council

Driver - 1 Year £152
 3 Years £223

Vehicle - £179

Operator

1 3 vehicles £154
4 to 20 vehicles £206
21 to 40 vehicles £485
Over 40 vehicles £714

Doncaster Council

Driver - 3 years £201.50

Vehicle £229.20

Operator 5 Years £591

The fees are set locally based on the costs incurred. The fees must be determined by the GLRB and must be robust so as not to attract legal challenges.

Whilst the fees charged by the Council in relation to taxi licensing are discretionary, this does not prevent the Council from charging such fees as it considers reasonable in recovering its costs related to the licensing regime. Indeed, the Council should be recovering its costs incurred otherwise the burden could fall on the local taxpayers.

In relation to licensing enforcement costs that cannot be met from the Licensing fees; these relate to driver enforcement costs. Section 53(2) of the LG(MP)A 1976 does not appear to make provision for the recovery of any costs by a council in connection with ongoing administration or enforcement in relation to driver licences. Therefore, these costs are not included in the calculation of fees.

As part of this exercise, consultation has taken place with representatives from the Local Authority Finance Department who have confirmed the methodology used and the fees calculated are reasonable.

It is anticipated that the fees will be reviewed in 12 months following the officers continued time monitoring and therefore the anticipated level of income generated will be subject to a further report.

Officers will continue to work closely with the Private Hire and or Hackney Carriage Associations via the Trade Liaison Group and the planned changes have been communicated accordingly.

Legislation (section 70 LG(MP)A 1976) requires that a period of statutory consultation (28 days) is carried out prior to any increase in fees. Representations made during the consultation period must be then considered within another 28 days before any changes are implemented. The proposed fees will be advertised in the Barnsley Chronicle on the 18th April and all current licence holders will be informed by e-mail. If no objections are received the new proposed fees will come into force on the 16th May 2025.

If any objections are received it is for the GLRB to then consider these and come to a decision regarding the fees which, at this point can be changed or remain the same.

Members are asked to approve the 28-day consultation to being on the 18th April 2025.

5. Background Papers

N/A

6. Officer Contact

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