

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**PLANNING, TAXI LICENSING AND RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Senior Licensing Officer

**SUBJECT:** Taxi Licensing Fees

**DATE:** 26 October 2017

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**REPORT FOR:** Decision

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**1.0 Summary**

1.1 The Committee is requested to consider the approval of revised fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing regime notably operator, vehicle, driver licences and tests to commence from April 2018.

1.2 During the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 the following number of tests were carried out and licence applications were made:

Driver Competency/Knowledge Tests	82
New Drivers	71
Renewal Drivers	0*
New Private Hire Operators	5
Renewal Private hire operators	0*
Private Hire Vehicles	243
Hackney Carriages	148

\*In line with statutory requirements the issuing of 3 year driver licences commenced in October 2015 so it is only from October 2018 that we will start getting driver renewals. Similarly the issuing of 5 year operator licence commenced in October 2015, until these come for renewal in October 2020.

The total number of current licences in place on 31/03/2017

Drivers	523
Private Hire Operators	72
Private Hire Vehicles	263
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	164

**2.0 Proposal**

2.3 The setting of fees is governed by The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Section 70), it allows for the recovery of costs in connection with administering, controlling and supervising the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing regime,

2.4 The proposed fees take into consideration the current administration, inspection and compliance costs related to each licence type in addition the significant costs associated with referring licences and applications to sub-committee. These fees have been calculated using a toolkit devised and used across the Welsh Local Authority Licensing Services and in consultation with our finance team and if approved will recognise a small net gain.

	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	
Vehicles (1 year) Hackney Carriage Private Hire	£129	£133	
Driver Licence (3 year)	£256	£244	excludes DBS and DVLA fee
Driver Licence (1 year – on request)	£140	£129	Excludes DBS and DVLA fee
Private Hire Operators (5 years)	£400	£406.50	excludes DBS fee
Knowledge/Competency Test	£36	£36.50	

2.6 For reference only it is useful to see fees currently charged by some of our neighbouring authorities. It must be remembered that it is difficult to make a direct comparison as some authorities have built in other charges into their fees e.g. garage tests for vehicles. The fees should reflect local staffing and processing costs and the implementation of local policies, hence there can be a wide variation in the level of fees set as is evident in the table below.

Fees all in £'s	Driver 3 year	Driver 1 year	Test	Operator	Private Hire Vehicle	Hackney Carriage
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	270	Not offered		413	187	218
<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	137 new 101 renewal	75 new 38 renewal	19	631	148 new 147 renewal	146 new 142 renewal
<b>Ceredigion</b>	323 new 190 renewal	278 new 144 renewal		291	159 new 144 renewal	196 new 146 renewal
<b>Denbighshire</b>		140	15	110 / year	200	200
<b>Herefordshire</b>	397 new 303 renewal			116 - 247	303	303
<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	272 new 230 renewal	Not offered		115	154	154
<b>Monmouth</b>	224 new 147 renewal	Not offered		737	181 new 158 renewal	184 new 150 renewal
<b>Neath Port Talbot</b>	213 new 160 renewal	128 new 64 renewal	28	650	327 new 250 renewal	327 new 250 renewal
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taff</b>	128	Not offered	30	372 - 435	256	256
<b>Shropshire</b>	190 renewal	Not offered	53	332 new 250 renewal	142 new 164 renewal	135 new 152 renewal
<b>Torfaen</b>	270 new 250 renewal	160 new 140 renewal		230 - 930	200 new 230 renewal	200 new 230 renewal

<b>Wrexham</b>	245 new 210 renewal	Not offered		500 - 1400	244 new 199 renewal	190.50 new 174.50 renewal
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2.6 Members are invited to approve the revised fees.

2.7 Should members approve the revised table of fees then The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 70 also requires them to be advertised in the local press giving at least 28 days for objections.

2.8 Should there be any objections then these will need to be considered and reported back to this committee along with any revisions considered appropriate

2.9 If no objections are made then these fees will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018

### **3.0 Options Considered/Available**

3.1 Fees need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that full cost recovery is achieved, staffing costs, on costs and the cost of materials increase on an annual basis, if fees are not reviewed then the fees may not achieve full cost recovery. The All Wales tool kit was devised to enable us to establish a fee in a consistent manner to our Welsh counterparts, and also to ensure that they are transparent and able to withstand challenge. The fees proposed have been set using this toolkit in consultation with our finance team and are therefore recommended for approval.

### **4.0 Preferred Choice and Reasons**

4.1 Consideration of the revised fees is required to ensure the Authority is in compliance with legal requirements.

### **5.0 Impact Assessment**

5.1 Is an impact assessment required? No

### **6.0 Corporate Improvement Plan**

6.1 Licensing contributes to various aspects of the 'Vision 2025' document - 'Change for Powys – delivering an open, pro-active and engaging council for 2025'. This proposal supports the priority areas of developing a vibrant economy and supporting our residents and communities.

### **7.0 Local Member(s)**

7.1 This report has no particular significance on one or some electoral divisions.

### **8.0 Other Front Line Services**

8.1 This report has no impact on front line services.

### **9.0 Communications**

9.1 The revised fees will be advertised in the local press as part of the consultation process.

## **10.0 Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)**

The professional Lead-Legal notes that the fees involved primarily arise from a legal duty to carry out statutory functions and obligations within the licencing regime as for the level of charges that involves the commercial considerations set out in the report and are supported by the legal service.

The Finance Business Partner Place notes the contents of the report, there is a prescriptive toolkit for calculating the fees from the All Wales Licensing Panel and the finance section have been fully involved with the service in calculating the proposed fees.

## **11.0 Scrutiny**

11.1 This report has not been scrutinised.

## **12.0 Statutory Officers**

12.1 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by finance.

12.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

## **13.0 Members' Interests**

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>That the revised Taxi Licensing fees be approved for consultation, and if following consultation no objections are received then they will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018</b>	<b>To enable a new compliant fee to be set for licences issued under The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976</b>

<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>			
<b>Within Policy:</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Within Budget:</b>	<b>Y</b>

<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	<b>Senior Licensing Officers</b>
<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>	<b>Immediate</b>

<b>Contact Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
Sue Jones	01597 827389	Susan.jones@powys.gov.uk

## **Background Papers used to prepare Report:**

**Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**

**Guidance Issued by the Home Office and Local Government Association.**

**All Wales Licensing Expert Panel Fees Toolkit**