

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING, RIGHTS OF WAY AND TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE

REPORT AUTHOR: Senior Licensing Officer

SUBJECT: Taxi Licensing Fees

DATE: December 2018

REPORT FOR: Decision

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 2019.

1.2 During the period of 1st April 2017 - 31st March 2018 the following number of tests were carried out and licence applications granted:

Driver Competency/Knowledge Tests	86
New Drivers	71
Renewal Drivers	0*
New Private Hire Operators	5
Renewal Private hire operators	0*
Private Hire Vehicles	297
Hackney Carriages	207

*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 started getting driver renewals. Similarly, the issuing of 5 year operator licences commenced in October 2015, until these come for renewal in October 2020.

The total number of current licences in place on 01/10/2018 are set out below, these are all up on 2017 (2017 figures in brackets)

Drivers	587 (523)
Private Hire Operators	77 (72)
Private Hire Vehicles	283 (263)
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	178 (164)

2.0 Proposal

2.1 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.

2.2 These fees have been calculated using a toolkit devised by the All Wales Licensing Expert Panel, as in previous years the toolkit has been utilised with assistance from our finance team.

2.3 The fee toolkit calculates the cost of several different elements of the service that figure into the final total fee, these are:

- the cost of materials such as making the plate and/or badge,
- the cost of processing an individual licence i.e. the actual officer time from the issuing of a licence renewal letter through to the issuing of the licence
- the cost of sub-committee hearings to consider individual licences/applications
- the cost of administering the taxi regime locally including training, meetings, queries, complaints, compliance checks etc. and this element of the fee will fluctuate downwards or upwards depending on how many licence holders we have; the more licence holders we have and the cost of this element is spread across a greater number of licence holders.

	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	
Vehicles (1 year) Hackney Carriage Private Hire	£133	£138	
Driver Licence (3 year)	£244	£247.50	excludes DBS and DVLA fee
Driver Licence (1 year – on request)	£140	£148.	Excludes DBS and DVLA fee
Private Hire Operators (5 years)	£400	£398	excludes DBS fee
Knowledge/Competency Test	£36.50	£38	

2.4 For reference only it is useful to see fees currently charged by some of our neighbouring authorities. Where both renewal and new licence fees are published the renewal fee has been used. It must be remembered that it is difficult to make direct comparisons as fees calculated using the toolkit will be specific to local staffing and on-costs, they also factor in the number of licences that are administered by the authority, both these can vary a great deal between authorities. The greatest variation that can be noted is that in vehicle fees and this is because many authorities require in-house testing of vehicles at council garages, this adds significant extra cost to the processing of a licence that is then recovered through the fee sometimes directly or as an additional cost, hence the often much higher vehicle licence fees charged by other authorities.

Fees all in £'s	Driver 3 year	Driver 1 year	Test	Operator	Private Hire Vehicle	Hackney Carriage
Blaenau Gwent	270	Not offered		515	218	218

Carmarthenshire	137	75	19	631	147	142
Ceredigion	304	157		375	157	162
Denbighshire	270	250	35	420	200	200
Herefordshire	201	Not offered		118 - 212	309	309
Merthyr Tydfil	230	Not offered		115	154	154
Monmouth	159	Not offered	60	754	165	159
Neath Port Talbot	187	75	30	650	250	250
Rhondda Cynon Taff	132		30	448	264	264
Shropshire	202	Not offered	53	254	156	142
Torfaen	250	150		970	200	200
Wrexham	215	Not offered		500	199	174.50

2.5 Members are invited to approve the revised fees.

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

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

2.8 If no objections are made then these fees will come into effect on 1st April 2019

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 whilst supporting and protecting 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 Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

9.0 Communications

9.1 Once approved by committee the policy will be consulted on.

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

10.1 The Principal Solicitor Public Protection

10.2 The Finance Manager Environment and Resources notes the contents of the report, finance have been fully involved in the calculation of the fees. The licensing regulations require full cost recovery from the fees charged. If income is greater than costs the requirement is to carry over the profit and reduce the cost of the licenses in the following year and vice versa if costs out way income, the fee would be increased in the following year to cover the additional cost incurred.

11.0 Scrutiny

11.1 This report has not been scrutinised.

12.0 Statutory Officers

12.1 The Head of Financial Services (Deputy S151 Officer) notes the comments of the Finance Manager Environment and Resources.

12.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: agrees with the recommendations of the officer

12.3 The Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the legal comment and makes no further comment.

13.0 Members' Interests

13.0 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.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
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 st April 2019	To enable a new compliant fee to be set for licences issued under The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Relevant Policy (ies):	
Within Policy:	Y
Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	N/A
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr James Evans

Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Senior Licensing Officer
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	To come into effect 01/04/2019

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Email:
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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

All Wales Licensing Expert Panel Fees Toolkit