

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

CHARGES FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FOR 2015/2016

Report of the Licensing Officer

Key Decision: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the Charges for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing for the financial year 2015/2016.

2.0 Recommendation

That:

- 2.1 (a) That the charges as shown at Appendix A are approved for consultation;
(b) That the necessary advertisement be placed; and
(c) In the event that no representations are received in response to the consultation, the new charges be implemented for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 Licensing charges for Taxi and Private Hire were last reviewed in September 2011 for the 3 year period to the end of March 2015. It is intended that fees should be reviewed annually through an assessment of relevant costs. This is important to ensure that our fees are legally robust and that we have used a transparent methodology. Havant Borough may only recover certain costs incurred in carrying out licensing functions as detailed in Section 53 and Section 70 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The proposed fees seek to fully recover all relevant costs to the Council with 2 exceptions. The proposed fees are set out in Appendix A. The calculation of fees from an assessment of relevant costs are shown in Appendix B.

- 3.2 The two exceptions are as follows:

a) The proposed Hackney Carriage vehicle licence fee is £20 less than we could charge given our assessment of costs. This has been recommended to avoid a significant increase in this fee during 2015/16 as

it is considered that this may have a significant impact upon the taxi businesses.

b) The knowledge test fee is a separate fee in addition to the new driver application. This is set as a separate fee. This is a fairer approach as it allows drivers who fail the knowledge test to abandon their intention to apply for a licence if they find the knowledge test too difficult. The knowledge test fee proposed is £5 less than we could charge given our assessment of costs. This has been recommended to avoid a significant increase in this fee during 2015/16 as it is considered that this may have a significant impact upon the businesses.

If Havant Borough Council decided to charge the maximum fees possible this would result in extra income of £1360.00 from Hackney carriage licence fees and knowledge test fees.

- 3.3 Any change to the charges for Vehicle and Operators licences has by law to be advertised in the local newspaper and any comments have to be considered at a subsequent meeting of the Licensing Committee.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Resources:

In arriving at the proposed charges, analysis of taxi/private hire licensing income/expenditure by the Council's Financial Team was undertaken. A copy of the figures produced as a result of the analysis is shown at appendix B.

4.2 Legal

The setting of fees for hackney carriage, private hire vehicle and operator licences is governed by section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The council may charge such amounts as are sufficient in the aggregate to cover the reasonable cost of carrying out vehicle inspections, the costs of providing hackney carriage stands and any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with these activities and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

The Act sets a maximum fee of £25 for the grant of vehicle and operator licences or any such sum as the council may determine. If the council wishes to charge more than £25 or vary its existing charges, the council must publish details in at least one local newspaper specifying a period of not less than 28 days within which objections to the variation can be made. A copy of the notice must be available for inspection by the public during the 28 day period and if no objections are received, or any objections made are withdrawn, the variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice. If objections are made and not withdrawn, the council must consider those objections and set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the variation shall come into force with or without

modification as decided by the council, after consideration of the objections.

4.3 Strategy:

The proposed fees brings Havant Borough Council's fees into alignment with relevant costs which we can recover through fees. In the main this re-adjustment results in only minor changes in fees. Re-assessing costs and fees is necessary to meet our strategic objective of achieving financial sustainability.

In the three cases cited in the report where a significant increase in fees would be required to cover relevant costs, it is recommended that a lower fees is set than we would be able to set to reduce the impact upon the taxi trade. This approach is consistent with our strategic objective to support economic growth. It is expected that our costs will be re-evaluated during the budget build for 2016-17 to further close any gap between income and costs..

4.4 Risks:

The fees proposed can be justified against a transparent assessment of our costs for administering this service.

4.5 Communications:

The taxi trade will be informed of the proposed fees via an advertisement which will be placed and should any comments be received, these will be referred back to the Licensing Committee on 14th January 2015. Once Committee have agreed the fees they will be reported to Cabinet for approval as part of the Budget Report to take effect from 1st April 2015.

We cannot charge fees until they are set by Cabinet at their meeting on 4th February 2015.

4.6 For the Community:

The community will be provided with a safe form of public transport funded through the fees proposed in this report.

4.7 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following:

No further action necessary.

6.0 Consultation

Public Consultation to follow agreement of the proposals in this report.

6.1 Appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed charges
Appendix B – Financial analysis figures
Appendix C – Effect of proposed charges in annual income
Appendix D – Integrated Impact Assessment

Background Papers:

None

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 30/10/2014

Finance: 31/10/2014

Relevant Executive Head: 03/11/2014

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