

REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE



DATE	24 th October 2018
PORTFOLIO	Community Services
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Taxi Licence Fees 2019

PURPOSE

1. To determine the level of taxi licence fees for the borough with effect from January 2019.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Licensing Committee maintain the current fee charges and no changes be made for 2019 for the following licences;

Private Hire Operator, Private Hire Driver, Private Hire Vehicle, Hackney Carriage Driver and Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To set fees to recover those costs which are permitted by legislation from the holders of taxi licences. The costs include issuing and administering all taxi licences, together with the costs of supervision and control of vehicle and operator licences, and the costs of inspection and provision of hackney ranks.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. Taxi licence fee setting is a function of the Licensing Committee. Sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permit the Council to set driver, vehicle and operator licence fees to recover certain specified costs. The effect of the legislation is that the service must not generate a profit to the Council. There are some costs which cannot legally be recovered from fees and are borne by the Council's general fund.
5. In Burnley the vehicle test element is payable direct to one of the testing stations approved to carry out taxi testing, each testing station sets their own charges within a competitive marketplace. This fee is payable in addition to the licence fee. Additionally, new drivers are required to sit a knowledge test at an additional cost.

6. Costs for each licence category (i.e. operators, private hire vehicles, private hire drivers, hackney proprietors & hackney drivers) are apportioned and recovered via the fee that is paid. Any surplus or deficit is applied to the relevant fee category of operator, proprietor, drivers or vehicles, as appropriate. Driver's licences are currently issued for three years and in order that there is fairness to drivers throughout this period fees are generally maintained at the same level for the duration of the three years, unless there is a significant variation or requirement to change. This approach has been agreed and implemented in conjunction with the Trade via the Taxi Task Group (TTG) for a number of years.
7. Licence fees reflect the Council's activities and administrative requirements that are set each year in conjunction with the Taxi Task Group for the annual work-plan. The Budgets, activities and costs reflect work-streams over an agreed three year period. This approach is within agreed existing practice that has been set with the Trade to avoid year on year shifts in fees and to provide consistency.
8. Whilst there have been inflationary increases and continued pro-active work by officers in progressing the agreed annual objectives, it is proposed that no variation is made to licensing fees during 2019. This is achieved by utilising broader back office efficiency savings that have been achieved across the overarching contract with Liberata as a key strategic partner to the Council. The Council's Taxi Reserve is anticipated to be in surplus of approximately £4,000 by the end of 2018. It is anticipated that costs will be met by existing budgets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

9. The proposed fees seek to recover permitted costs in accordance with the Council's taxi fee policy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

10. None.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

11. Trade Consultation via Operators & Hackney Proprietors Sept/Oct 2018, and via Taxi Task Group Meeting October 2018.
12. Councillors Graham, Pate, Royle and Cant.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

13. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

Karen Davies

ALSO:

Peter Henderson