

<b>Committee:</b>	Licensing & Environmental Health	<b>Date:</b>	21 January 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed 2025/26 Licence Fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jamie Livermore, Senior Licensing & Compliance Officer, 01799 510326	<b>Item for decision:</b>	Yes

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## Summary

1.1. This report informs Members on the results of the statutory public consultation on the proposed variation to Licence fees relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators to take effect from 1 April 2025.

## Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the consultation responses and decide to approve or not approve the proposed fees for referral to Full Council for adoption.

## Financial Implications

3.1. The Local Authority is required to review its fees and charges as part of its annual budget setting process. In accordance with both legislation and guidance, it is appropriate for fees and charges associated with the Licensing regime to be set as cost-recoverable.

## Background Papers

4.1.

- A – [Proposed 2025/26 Licence Fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators report of 3 October 2024](#) and [Appendix A](#)
- B – Consultation Responses
- C – Minutes of Trade meeting

D – Local Government Association Guidance on locally set Licence fees (Dec 2023) [LGA guidance on locally set licensing fees | Local Government Association](#)

E – S70 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

## Impact

### 5.1.

Communication/Consultation	Statute requires notice of proposed changes to be published in at least one local newspaper for a period of at least 28 days. The consultation ran from Thursday 7 November 2024 to Thursday 5 December 2024.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	Any changes in fees must be communicated to all existing licence holders, and consultation on any proposed changes will be conducted with interested parties and the wider public to ensure there is an opportunity to contribute to any such decision.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Local Authority is permitted to charge a reasonable fee for the grant of a licence with the view to recovering the costs of the issue, administration and supervision of such licences.

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

## Situation

**6.1.** This report outlines the steps taken since the previous Committee meeting of the 3 October 2024, and Members may wish to refer to the licence fee report which is attached as **Background Paper A**.

**6.2.** A public consultation ran for a period of 28 days – Thursday 7 November 2024 to Thursday 5 December 2024 - in line with statutory requirements and was advertised in the Dunmow Broadcast and Saffron Walden Reporter, the Council's website and through email correspondence to all existing licence holders.

**6.3.** A total of three objections were received to the proposed fees, all from licensed drivers. **Background Paper B** shows those comments and subsequent responses by Officers.

**6.4.** Although falling outside of the formal consultation period, a meeting was offered to existing licence holders to discuss any questions they had about the fee proposals. This was held remotely on Wednesday 18 December 2024 where two members of the taxi and private hire trade attended along with Council Officers from Licensing, Legal and Finance. The full minutes are shown as **Background Paper C**. Members will note that one attendee raised dissatisfaction on the transparency of the figures and believes that a full and thorough breakdown should be presented ahead of the consultation periods. Officers were prepared to supply an enhanced breakdown of figures but have not received any further communication about the specifics of what were desired.

**6.5.** The issue of how the fees and charges are presented to the Trade is recurrent and is based on a commitment given to the Trade a number of years ago under a

different administration and different officers, none of whom are still employed by the Council. The commitment originated from a successful challenge made by the Trade arising from overcharging.

**6.6.** Currently the proposed fees are presented in a table comparing them to the current fees. There is also a breakdown of each of the different types of costs incurred/forecast to be incurred in running the taxi licensing service

**6.7.** It is therefore proposed to work with Trade representation in 2025/26 to understand what is specifically causing a concern in how the fees and charges calculations are presented and how this is potentially acting to a disadvantage. It is not thought the Uttlesford Council is acting inconsistently with the way other Authorities engage with the Trade, but this will be confirmed by a benchmarking exercise.

**6.8.** It is quite correct that the Council is open and transparent in presenting methodology and figures used to support levying recoverable costs for administering taxi and private hire licensing, but it is equally incumbent upon the Council to ensure that it avoids placing any unnecessary or unreasonable costs upon the trade. It is of concern that increased officer time required to present the fees and charges in a different way may result in such increased costs.

**6.9.** A further report detailing the outcome of the trade engagement, benchmarking and any cost implications will be presented to Members to permit a formally recorded decision on how future presentation of the fees and charges should be made in 2026/27.

**6.10.** Members are advised to refer to **Background Paper D and E** for further information and clarification on Licence fee setting from the Local Government Association and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 respectively.