

NON EXEMPT

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

13 January 2015

CHARGES FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FOR 2015/2016

Report of the Licensing Team Leader

FOR DECISION

Key Decision: No

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

- 2.1 That the charges as shown at Appendix I approved by Committee on 21 November for consultation be implemented for the financial year commencing 1 April 2015.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 Licensing charges for Taxi and Private Hire were last reviewed in 2008/2009. 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. East Hampshire District Council 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 are set out in Appendix I and were agreed by Licensing Committee during their meeting on 21 November. The minutes of this meeting are shown in Appendix II.

- 3.2 The fees have been subject to a 28 day consultation period. An advertisement has been placed in a local newspaper, a notice has been on display in the Council Offices and a copy provided to the Chair of the East Hampshire Taxi Association.
- 3.3 No objections to the proposed fees have been received following public consultation.

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. The proposed fees were agreed by Licensing Committee 21 November 2014 and have been through a consultation process.

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 represent East Hampshire District Council's costs and as such they are relevant costs which may be recover through fees. This review and adjustment represents relatively minor changes in fees. Re-assessing costs and fees is necessary to meet our strategic objective of achieving financial sustainability and public service excellence.

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. Furthermore, any surplus or deficit will be carried forward when reviewing future fees.

4.4 Risks:

The fees proposed represent our costs for administering this service.

4.5 Communications:

The trade have been informed of the proposed fees by advertisement in a local paper and through informing the local Taxi Association. Any comments will be referred to the Licensing Committee on 13 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 1 April 2015.

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

4.6 For the Community:

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

5.0 Consultation

The fees have been through a public consultation process.

6.0 Appendices:

Appendix I – Proposed charges

Appendix II – Minutes of Licensing Committee meeting held 21 November 2014

Background Papers:

None

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 5 January 2015

Finance: 31 January 2014

Relevant Executive Head: 15 December 2014

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