

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

30 January 2025

Report Title: Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Fees & Charges 2025/2026

Submitted by: Service Director - Regulatory Services & Licensing Administration
Team Manager

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centre & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To request that Public Protection Committee considers the proposed taxi and private hire fees, following consultation, as referred to in the report.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
1. That Public Protection Committee approves the proposed taxi and private hire fees for 2025/26			
<u>Reasons</u>			
Decisions relating to the setting of non-statutory fees and charges for taxi licensing have been delegated from Council to the Public Protection Committee.			

1. Background

- 1.1 The approval of certain fees and charges relating to the licensing of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licensing regimes are Council functions.
- 1.2 Council at their meeting on 22nd February 2017 delegated this function to Public Protection Committee.

2. Issues

- 2.1 A report was presented to Public Protection Committee on 29th October 2024 in respect of the proposed fees and charges for Private Hire and Hackney carriage driver, vehicle and operator fees and charges for 2025/26. The committee discussed the proposed fees and charges and recommended that they should be advertised and a period of consultation undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 before being determined.
- 2.2 The advertisement was placed in the Sentinel newspaper on 12th November 2024 and a copy placed at Castle House. The consultation period ran from 12th November 2024 until 9th December 2024. A copy of the consultation paperwork was emailed to all licence holders and trade representatives on 11th November 2024 including private hire operators, vehicle hire companies, and the hackney carriage trade association.
- 2.3 Within the consultation period there was one response received by a licensed driver. The email stated that the "Fee is to higher". No other responses were received.

2.4 The Committee report dated 29th October 2024 at paragraphs 3.4-3.7 explained the reasons behind the proposed amendments in certain fees.

2.5 The proposed fees and charges for 2025-26 are:

a	b	c	d
Private Hire/Hackney Carriage (subject to consultation)	Fee/Charge 2024-25 (£)	Proposed Fee/Charge 2025-26 (£)	% Change
<u>OPERATORS</u>			
PHO Application fee	£329.00	£330.00	0.30%
Add/Remove Director	£45.00	£46.00	2.22%
Copy/Replacement Licence	£8.00	£8.00	0.00%
Basic DBS*	£18.00	£21.50	19.44%
NEW - Director/Licence holder - Change of home address	N/A	£18.00	N/A
NEW - Exemption Request	N/A	£51.00	N/A
<u>DRIVERS</u>			
Dual Driver Badge - 3 years	£250.00	£261.00	4.40%
Change of address	£18.00	£18.00	0.00%
Replacement badge (vehicle or driver copy)	£15.00	£16.00	6.67%
Reissue/replacement badge (with amended details)	£31.00	£33.00	6.45%
DBS (CRB check)*	£38.00	£49.50	30.26%
DBS (CRB check) online*	£64.34	£75.84	17.87%
Exemption certificates	£15.00	£16.00	6.67%
Knowledge test	£20.00	£13.00	-35.00%
Fail to attend Knowledge Test	£20.00	£13.00	-35.00%
Change of Name	£21.00	£22.00	4.76%
DE Training replacement cert	£0.00	£0.00	N/A
Copy of Paper Licence	£8.00	£8.00	0.00%
Disability & Safeguarding Training	£40+VAT	£40+VAT	0.00%
NEW - Exemption Request	N/A	£51.00	N/A
NEW - Application Support appointment	N/A	£18.00	N/A
<u>VEHICLES</u>			
HCV application fee	£186.00	£193.00	3.76%
PHV application fee	£173.00	£182.00	5.20%
Transfer of vehicle	£45.00	£46.00	2.22%
Change of vehicle registration	£52.00	£54.00	3.85%
Failure to attend for vehicle test	£73.00	£76.00	4.11%
Retest	£31.00	£32.00	3.23%
Replacement plate carrier – front	£11.00	£11.00	0.00%
Replacement plate carrier – rear	£13.00	£14.00	7.69%
Replacement vehicle plate - front	£9.00	£9.00	0.00%

Replacement vehicle plate - rear	£12.00	£13.00	8.33%
Replacement vehicle sticker signage	£6.00	£6.00	0.00%
Copy of paper part of licence	£8.00	£8.00	0.00%
Change of Vehicle Colour	£52.00	£54.00	3.85%
HCV/PHV safety test	£79.00	£82.00	3.80%
Basic DBS*	£18.00	£21.50	19.44%
Change of Name/Address	£45.00	£46.00	2.22%
Spot check	£23.00	£23.00	0.00%
Replacement Internal Plate	£8.00	£8.00	0.00%
NEW - Exemption Request	N/A	£51.00	N/A
NEW - PHV change of base	N/A	£18.00	N/A
NEW - Copy of HCV Tariff sheet	N/A	£3.00	N/A

- 2.6 On 8th November 2024 the Disclosure and Barring Service published a notice that they would be increasing their fees on 2nd December 2024. The fees affected are annotated with an asterisk (*) above. These fees are set independently of the Council and apply nationally. These fees did not form part of the consultation. The Council use an external body for conducting enhanced DBS checks who charge an administrative fee for their service. The breakdown is included in the table below:

Enhanced DBS	£49.50
Admin fee plus vat	£24.00
Ebulk fee plus vat	£2.34
Total	£75.84

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Public Protection Committee approves the proposed taxi and private hire fees for 2025/26.

4. Reasons

- 4.1 The Council is required to set fees for private hire and hackney carriage licenses for 2025/26.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 The Council is required to set fees for private hire and hackney carriage licenses for 2025/26. The fees proposed are based on cost recovery.
- 5.2 To retain the current fees. This would lead to Council functions not being fully cost recovered.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (sec. 70) provides provision for the setting of fees and charges in relation to Operator and Vehicle licence fees. The fees are to be reasonable costs for carrying out the granting and renewal of licenses, costs for providing Hackney Carriage stands and costs relating to control and supervision of such vehicles.

- 6.2 The Act also specifies a maximum amount for the activities of £25 and should the costs exceed this then the Act defines a process of advertising and dealing with any objections made in relation to proposed fees.
- 6.3 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (sec. 53(2)) states that in relation to driver licence fees, a district council may demand and recover for the grant to any person of a licence to drive a hackney carriage, or a private hire vehicle, a fee as they consider reasonable. With a view to recovering the costs of issue and administration.
- 6.4 The Deregulation Act 2015 amended the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in relation to the duration of licences for hackney carriage and private hire drivers and private hire operators to establish a standard duration of three years for hackney carriage and private hire driver licences and five years for a private hire operator licence.
- 6.5 The European Services Directive states (Art 12.2) "*Authorisation procedures and formalities shall not be dissuasive and shall not unduly complicate or delay the provision of the service. They shall be easily accessible and any charges which the applicants may incur from their application shall be reasonable and proportionate to the cost of the authorisation procedures in question and shall not exceed the cost of the procedures*". Councils must not use fees covered by the Directive to make a profit or act as an economic deterrent to deter certain business types from operating within an area.
- 6.6 In December 2019 the Court of Appeal in the case "*R (on the application of Abdul Rehman, on behalf of the Wakefield District Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association) v The Council of the City of Wakefield and The Local Government Association (Intervening) [2019] EWCA Civ 2166*" confirmed, that there is no general principle that the taxi licensing fee regime should be self-financing. Also that the costs associated to enforcing the behaviour of licensed drivers could be recovered via the licence fee set under s53(2) of the 1976 Act.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 There are no identified equality implications arising from the content of the report.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are a number of factors involved in setting a fees and charges, which have financial and resource implications, such as:
- The number of licenses issues in the forthcoming year – A review of recent trends and licenses due for renewal are used to inform this element.
 - The resources required delivering these activities – The number of licenses and resources required to deliver these are intrinsically linked.
 - The processes and procedures completed in issuing and renewing licenses – The processes are regularly reviewed and updated, many applications are now through on-line applications.
 - The Councils Taxi policy requirements and standards – This sets the foundations for the taxi licensing and influences the above points.
- 8.2 There is also provision within the regime that Private Hire drivers and vehicles can be licensed by other Local Authorities – Over the past years there has been a reduction in the number of both driver licenses and vehicle licenses issued by the Council.

- 8.3 There will be financial and resource implications for the Council if full cost recovery is not achieved.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 The Council may be open to challenge should the calculation of the fees and charges prove to be contrary to the Act. The best practice guidance is followed in setting the fees and charges in order to mitigate such risk.
- 9.2 Judicial Review of a decision may be made on the following grounds:
- Ultra vires – no power to levy a particular fee, or fees used to raise revenue unlawfully, or
 - Wednesbury rules – decision was unreasonable or irrational
- Again, best practice is followed in order to mitigate against such risk.
- 9.3 The financial and resource implications are also considered to be risks, should the estimates be incorrect or change within the forthcoming year, these elements and controls are discussed in section 8 of this report.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1 The following goals are relevant:



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

One Digital Council

One Green Council

This report does not impact upon any of the One Council Programmes.

12. Key Decision Information

- 12.1 Not applicable

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 [Public Protection report 29th October 2024](#)

13.2 [Council report 22nd February 2017](#)

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 None

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 [LGA Guidance on Local Fee Setting](#)

15.2 [DBS fees are changing in December - GOV.UK](#)