

Appendix 1A

Response to consultation on Taxi and Private Hire fees and charges for 2017-18.

I have been asked by the licensed Hackney Carriage (HC) trade to respond to the proposals put to the licensing committee on 30th March 2017. I am also a Private Hire (PH) operator in Maidstone.

You will not be surprised to hear there is much opposition to the proposed massive increases to our fees and charges.

The proposed increases seem to vary between -19.7 % for a Private Hire drivers licence renewal (3 years) and +35.7% for a private hire drivers licence (1 year) and various percentage increases inbetween . Why is there such a variation? If the proposal was that increases across the board should be the rate of inflation since the last increase then we would not be opposing these proposals. I would add that the cost of a Hackney carriage vehicle licence was £259 in the year 2015-16, jumped to £295 in 2016-17 including a payment towards the demand survey and for 2017-18 is now proposed to be £365. We understand the hypothecation of funds towards the demand survey and monitor but would like to be supplied with evidence which justify these figures. Hypothecated fees should be clearly visible on Hackney Carriage vehicle licence and Dual & HC drivers badge application forms. What is the total cost of these items divided by the number of vehicles licenced per year on average and years taken to cover the cost of said items. We also understand that the licensing department should be self financing but feel these increases are arbitrary and should be more balanced. Please see our proposals in the table below. We believe a 5% increase in our overall charges is more than adequate to cover the costs of running the taxi section of the licensing department. Please note the Taxi trade has not asked for an increase in fares for 4 years.

We believe the cost of a Private Hire badge or dual badge should be the same as a Hackney Carriage badge whether one or 3 years. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicle licences should also cost the same, excluding hypothecated items. In practice they are subject to the same test and administration.

We believe that an unintended consequence of the age and mileage restrictions on licensed vehicles which are desirable from an environmental point of view have encouraged private hire operators to licence their vehicles in Tonbridge and Malling which has a less strict regulatory environment and then work them in Maidstone (within the law). We have the worst of both worlds. Private hire vehicles being worked here but licensed elsewhere and revenues from these vehicles and drivers going to TMBC. We know this is happening because we speak to private hire operators who tell us this is exactly what they are doing. Indeed Express Taxis, Streamline Taxis, Apollo Taxis & Cavalier Taxis all have operations in Tonbridge & Malling. You may well see their TMBC licensed vehicles in Maidstone.

I should also add that vehicles licenced elsewhere are outside of the jurisdiction of the MBC Licensing Dept. May we suggest relaxing current restrictions in order that vehicles working here are encouraged to licence here. To that end may we suggest that licensed vehicles can be licensed for the first time up to 4 years of age and 100,000 miles and then worked until 10 years from the date of first registration. This is much closer to the position in TMBC but still slightly tighter and may encourage operators to licence here rather than elsewhere to the benefit of all concerned.

Kind Regards

Neil Cox

Chair Maidstone Taxi Association.

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	Existing Fees	MBC proposed fees	Taxi trade proposals
Dual badge and Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence			
On initial application	£315 for 3 years £185 for 1 year	£370 which includes £22.04 for unmet demand survey and £29.43 for monitor	£278 for 3 years plus hypothecated fees of £51.47 £195 for 1 year inc fees
DBS search fee	£44 or £13/year	£44 or £13/year	£44 or £13/year
Total	£359 for 3 years £229 for 1 year	£414 for 3 years £234 for 1 year	£374 for 3 years £239 for 1 year
On renewal	£260 for 3 years £130 for 1 year	£325 for 3 years £135 for 1 year £22.04 & £29.43 as above	£273 for 3 years £136 for 1 year
DBS search fee	As above	As above	As above

Private Hire Drivers Licence

On initial application	£255 for 3 years £170 for 1 year	£275 for 3 years £180 for one year	£278 for 3 years £195 for 1 year
DBS search fee	As above	As above	As above
Total	£309 for 3 years £165 for 1 year	£319 for 3 years £224 for one year	£322 for 3 years £239 for one year
On renewal	£299 for 3 years £214 for 1 year	£240 for 3 years £125 for 1 year	£273 for 3 years £136 for one year
DBS search fee	£220 for 3 years ? £120 for one year Not being charged	As above	As above
Total inc DBS fee	£264 for 3 years?	£284 for 3 years?	£356 for 3 years £268 for 1 year

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence

On application	£265 plus £30 for unmet demand survey	£365 for 1 year which includes £22.04 plus £29.43	£278 plus £51.47 hypothecated fees. £329.72
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Private Hire Vehicle Licence

On Application	£250	£315	£278
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Private Hire Operators Licence

On initial application 5 year	£475	£485	£498 plus see below table
On renewal 5 year licence	£400	£405	£420 “
On initial application 3 year licence	£335	£340	£351 “
On renewal 3 year licence	£275	£275	£288 “
On initial application 1 year licence	£190	£195	£200 “
On renewal 1 year licence	£130	£130	£136 “

For PH operators with more than 10 vehicles add £50/year per vehicle. Perhaps these extra funds could be hypothecated towards night time enforcement of taxi regulations. The larger operators tend to be the ones whose vehicles sail close to the wind!

Other Costs

Change of ownership of licensed vehicle	£69	£70	£70
Replace plate	£23	£23	£23
Replace Badge	£9.50	£10	£10
Replace internal plate holder	£1.75	£1.75	£2
Copy of existing paper licence	£12	£12	£12
Change of address details for a replacement licence	£12	£12	£12
Change of name for a vehicle or operators licence	£12	£12	£12
Change of name and address for a drivers badge	£21	£21	£21
Vehicle Exemption certificate or general admin fee	£44	£45	£45
Vehicle Retest	£48	£48	£48