

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**PLANNING, RIGHTS OF WAY AND TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Senior Licensing Officer**

**REPORT TITLE: Taxi Licensing Fees**

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**REPORT FOR: Decision**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 To consider Taxi Licensing fees for the period April 2021 - March 2022

**2. Background**

2.1 The setting of fees is governed by The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, it allows for the recovery of costs in connection with administering, controlling and supervising the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing regime.

2.2 Fees are calculated using a toolkit devised by the All Wales Licensing Expert Panel with assistance from our finance team. The committee usually approves fees for consultation ready for implementation the following 1<sup>st</sup> April.

2.3 The current fees are set out below:

Vehicles (1 year) Hackney Carriage Private Hire	£148	
Driver Licence (3 year)	£260	excludes DBS fee
Driver Licence (1 year – on request)	£150	excludes DBS fee
Private Hire Operators (5 years)	£405	excludes DBS fee
Knowledge/Competency Test	£40	

Number of current licences as of 01/01/2021, in brackets are figures for 01/10/19.

\* significant reduction in number of licensed vehicles - many operators have decided to not renew or to defer renewing vehicle licences during pandemic.

Drivers	500 (498)
Private Hire Operators	72 (78)
Private Hire Vehicles	247 (264)*
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	117 (164)*

- 2.4 Fees for 2021/2022 period would be based on figures and costs in administering the taxi licensing regime in the 2019/2020 period. There were no significant changes in the way that licences were processed in that period or in the number of licences processed so it is likely the fees would potentially go up slightly due to increased staff hourly rates and any material costs.

During the 2020/21 period due to the covid pandemic, with officers working from home, the authority has had to adapt the processes involved in issuing licences. Usual practice would be that customers make appointments to meet officers at the council offices to deliver their paperwork, for officers to arrange for payments, take copies of documents and also to inspect vehicles. Applicants are now required to submit their renewal documents electronically; vehicle inspections have been suspended temporarily for obvious reasons in relation to reducing risk of virus transmission. If we need to see a new vehicle this is being done by video link or photos. In addition, compliance checks have temporarily been suspended.

As a result, the costs for this last year which are used to calculate the costs for following year's 2022/23 fees are likely to be slightly less but this will not be known until later in the year.

- 2.5 Mindful that the trade has faced a challenging year along with most other businesses in Powys it is proposed that fees for 2021/22 are left as they are to avoid an anticipated increase and are reviewed for 2022/23 taking into account the costs in administering the regime for the previous 2 years i.e.

- 2019/20 the pre-covid year when there were no significant changes in processing licences and
- 2020/21 the covid year when processes and compliance were paired back.

- 2.6 Rather than a likely uplift in fees this coming year followed by a reduction in fees the following year, considering costs across a 2-year period will mean we avoid an anticipated increase in fees this year which will be balanced by an anticipated reduction next year which should be more acceptable to the trade.

- 2.9 The finance section has been consulted and are in agreement with this approach

### **3. Advice**

- 3.1 It is recommended that taxi fees are not reviewed for 2021/22 but left as they are. A review of taxi fees will be undertaken for implementation April 2022/23. These fees can consider costs across the 2019/20 & 2020/21 periods together and will result in a more balanced fee for the trade overall.

### **4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 None, finance have been consulted and agree with the proposal.

### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 The authority is required to set a complaint fee based on cost recovery.

### **6. Data Protection**

- 6.1 There are no implications for processing of personal data in the consideration or approval of this report.

### **7. Comment from local member(s)**

- 7.1 N/A fees are Powys wide.

### **8. Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 N/A - Statutory requirement to charge a compliant fee.

### **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 To approve that taxi licence fees for 2021/22 remain unchanged.

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