

## **Report to Environment and Licensing Committee**

**Subject: Proposed Taxi Licensing Fees for 2022/2023**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**Author: Report of Corporate Director**

### **Purpose**

To notify members of the objections received regarding the proposed fees for taxi driver, operators and vehicle licences for 2022/2023 as detailed in Appendix 1, that were advertisement in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in January/February 2022.

To seek approval of the modified fees as detailed at Appendix 2, which are the current 2021/2022 rates, to allow for a full review of the fees to take place before introducing any further fee increases.

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **That Members:**

**Approve the modified fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report to come into effect from the 1 June 2022.**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 The fixing of fees for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators is a function of the Environment and Licensing Committee as laid out in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. At the Environment and Licensing Committee meeting held on 18 January 2022 it was resolved that:

*Members approve the fees for taxi driver, operators and vehicle licences as detailed in Appendix 2 (Appendix 1 for the purposes of this report) for 2022/23 for advertisement in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, such fees to automatically come into force if no objections are received within the statutory period. If any objections are received within the statutory period that these be referred back to Committee for consideration in accordance with the legislation.*

- 1.3 The proposed fees for driver, operator and vehicle licences (Appendix 1) were published in accordance with the legislation and the consultation was open for 28 days from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022. A total of 2 objections were

received. A letter sent by email to the Chair on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 prior to the consultation period as detailed at Appendix 3, and a further objection sent via email to all Members on the 23 February 2022 as detailed at Appendix 4.

During the covid pandemic there were a number of changes to the licensing application process which will remain in place going forward. These include moving some services online and adjustments to the appointment process.

Given the changes to the procedures, whilst also bearing in mind the objections received including the way in which the taxi licensing budget is presented, it is felt appropriate at this time for a review of the setting of taxi license fees and the presentation of the taxi licence budget be undertaken to ensure that it is more transparent and to consider the impact of the changes in processes that have occurred.

Although the Council's taxi licensing regime is operated on a costs recovery basis and has currently been operating at a deficit and only the reasonable costs of what we are entitled to charge for has been included when fixing the fees, it is felt that there should not be any increase to the fees whilst the review is being undertaken.

As such it is the Corporate Director's opinion that the proposed fees as set out at Appendix 1 should not be implemented but instead the modified fees as set out at Appendix 2 should come into force. These modified fees replicate the current 2021/2022 fees so in essence prevents an increase in the fees at this time, which will allow for a full review to be undertaken.

Should the review result in any changes to the fees then the matter will be brought back to Members for consideration and any changes, if recommended and approved, would go out for advertisement in line with the legislation before coming into effect.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 For the reasons outlined above, it is proposed the Members approve the modified fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report with effect from the 1 June 2022.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 An alternative option would be to introduced the fees without modification or approve a different fee regime for 2022/2023 entirely. This may result in additional or less monies being received depending upon the approach adopted. However, as set out within the body of the report, it is considered appropriate at this stage to review the processes behind the issuing of taxi licences and their accompanying costs.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Approving the modified fees for 2022/23 will mean that they will not receive the proposed 5.5% increase at this time, and this will affect the delivery of income targets / efficiencies. The impact of the review on the level of the fees, at this stage is unclear. The results of the review, when it is complete, will be considered, which may or may not result in an increase to the fees.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The fixing of fees for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators is a function of the Environment and Licensing Committee as laid out in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.

The statutory power for the setting of the modified fees is governed by sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

#### **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 None

#### **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 None

#### **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Taxi driver, vehicles and operator proposed fees 2022/2023  
Appendix 2 – Modified Taxi driver, vehicles and operator proposed fees 2022/2023  
Appendix 3 - Copy of written objection received by the Chair on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 prior to the consultation period.  
Appendix 4 – Copy of email objection received on the 23 February 2022

#### **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None

#### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**

