

Appendix 1

Representations – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fee Rise – Gedling Borough Council

7th May 2025

1. Firstly, it is essential to note a reality, that licencing fees are set by Gedling Borough Council based on whether or not a licencing account is in a **deficit** or a **surplus**, and that the fee rise or reduction, is based on the amount of that deficit or surplus, without knowing the actual value of either, a fee cannot be set accurately.
2. On 15 April 2025, the Environment and Licencing Committee approved a rise in fees for **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences**, for a specific increase of **17%**, considerably higher than inflation and considerably higher than other licencing authorities in the Nottinghamshire area.
3. The committee also approved a rise in fees for **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licences**, for 5%, which is slightly above inflation and therefore no great cause for concern. In my view, even if there are errors within the accounting process that need to be rectified, simply increasing the fees by such an amount, would be appropriate, as an interim measure. There was no increase approved for operator licences.
4. As part of an investigation into the **General Licencing Accounts** at Gedling Borough Council, which do not include hackney carriage and private hire, I have discovered that Gedling Borough Council appear to have been grouping all Legal Services Licencing Charges together, within both general, hackney carriage and private hire and then estimating the service charges within Hackney Carriage/Private Hire and General Licencing, therefore creating documented deficit positions which, if I have interpreted her words correctly, cannot be evidenced effectively as accurate. They appear to have also then been looking to concentrate on recouping fees where there is a more probable chance of reducing deficits. This appears to be evidenced by the document from your **Section 151 Officer**, which I have included at **Annex A** of these representations, I have highlighted the relevant part in **RED**. Of course, as usual this is open to correction.
5. As you are aware, General Licencing Accounts must be separate from Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, and the latter must be separated into three accounts, which are driver, vehicle and operator licences, in order to comply with the law, any other kind of grouping, is unlawful.
6. Your **Section 151 Officer** has appeared to admit clearly and with integrity, that Gedling Borough Council has not been doing this, and that they will however be doing it moving forwards. This would appear to render the fee increase decision of 15 April 2025 incorrect and open to serious scrutiny at the very minimum, and therefore I ask you do the following as a matter of importance:
 - Approve a fee rise of **5%** in the **driver licence** category for 2025/2026, which has been recommended by your officers.
 - Approve a fee rise of **5%** in the **vehicle licence** category for 2025/2026, which is less than the recommendation by your officers, but in line with the above category and reasonable as an interim measure, considering the recommendation below.
 - Instruct your **Section 151 Officer** to carry out a **full review** of the **Legal Services Charges** over the last **six financial years**, within the **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Accounts**, so that an accurate deficit or surplus picture is established, then fees can be set accurately in 2026/2027.
7. Of course it is up to you as to how you choose to act, the evidence appears to be clear and unequivocal. Now, *con permiso* councillors, the hall is rented, the orchestra are engaged, it's now time to see if you can do the right thing and dance....

Kind regards,



