

Committee named meeting dated

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees and Charges – Update report on the consideration of objections received

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor M Dormer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Wilkes – Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
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Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members consider the objections received to the 2026/2027 proposed licence fee increases in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle licences and operator licences and RECOMMEND referring the matter, including any recommendations, to full COUNCIL for determination.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the legal agreement established with the formation of Worcestershire Regulatory Services, licensing remains a reserved matter. This means that all policy decisions, as well as income and fee setting, remain the responsibility of the Council.
- 2.2 It is the Council's role to review and set its licensing fees and charges on an annual basis. The Licensing and Support Services Manager at Worcestershire Regulatory Services works closely with the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer alongside the Council's wider Finance Team to ensure all fees remain cost neutral.
- 2.3 The annual review of licensing fees and charges took place in December 2025. A copy of the proposed Licensing & Environmental Health fees and charges for 2026/27 that was presented at Council is attached at "**Appendix 3**". These fees and charges include the fees

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proposed by the Council to ensure that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire service is run on a cost-neutral basis.

- 2.4 The Council is required by section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, to advertise any proposed variation to its fees for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and operator licences by publishing a notice in a local newspaper. This notice must provide a period of not less than 28 days for people to raise objections to the proposed variations to the fees.
- 2.5 If an objection is made against the proposed variation and not withdrawn then the Licensing Committee must consider the objection raised before recommending onto full Council. The mechanism to bring the matter before full Council is by way of referral and recommendation through the Licensing Committee.
- 2.6 On the 2nd April a report was presented to the Licensing Committee outlining the objections received to the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees and charges agreed at Council. Members requested that further information on the financial position of the Council be presented to the Licensing Committee at the next meeting to allow Members to make a more informed decision.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 It is the Council's role to review and set its licensing fees and charges on an annual basis. The Licensing and Support Services Manager at Worcestershire Regulatory Services works closely with the Director of Finance and the Council's Section 151 Officer to establish accurate details aimed at achieving full cost recovery of the licensing service, in relation to the relevant cost centres.
- 3.2 The table below sets out the Council's proposed licence fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle and operator licences for the 2026/27 financial year as shown in Appendix 3. The proposed fees are a 3% increase (rounded up or down) on the 2025/26 licence fees.

Licence type	Current fee	Proposed fee
Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Licence (new and renewal)	£308.50	£318.00
Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Licence (temporary licence)	£231.40	£238.00

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Private Hire Operator's Licence (5-year licence) (up to 3 vehicles)	£708.90	£730.00
Private Hire Operator's Licence (per additional vehicle)	£18.90	£19.00

- 3.3 In accordance with section 70(1) of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, on 14th January 2026, a notice appeared in the Redditch Advertiser announcing the above proposed fee increases and inviting objections within 28 days of the date of newspaper's publication. A copy of the notice was also placed at the Council's offices. The last date for objections was 10th February 2026.
- 3.4 On 23rd January 2026 the licensing service received an objection from Asim Nazir, Imran Altaf, and Mohammed Ilyas as representatives of the Redditch Taxi Association. The objection is attached as **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.5 The objection from the Taxi Association raised concerns that the proposed increased fees do not reflect the impact of cross bordering, increased cost of living, illegal parking on ranks, or reflect the current level of administrative service.
- 3.6 On 9th February 2026 the licensing service received an objection from Amjad Ali Khan of A2B Taxis and Contracts (Redditch) Ltd, who holds a Private Hire operators licence and Private Hire vehicle licences with Redditch Borough Council. The objection is given as **APPENDIX 2**.
- 3.7 The objection from A2B Taxis and Contracts (Redditch) Ltd raised concerns that the proposed fees are disproportionate in terms of the financial pressures resulting from current policy requirements and in respect of the level of administrative service provided. The objection also details concerns that the proposed fees may drive the taxi trade to be licensed by other authorities whose licence fees are lower; the objection provides a cost comparison with Wolverhampton City Council's licensing fees.
- 3.8 When analysing and discussing any proposed increases in fees officers take into account a number of factors to ensure that the budget remains cost neutral. If licensing application projections remain the same as 25/26 and there is no fee increase then the Council will see a shortfall of between £4-5k in income to fund the service in 26/27.
- 3.9 In proposing the 3% increase a number of variables are analysed and costed including but not restricted to:

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- Officer costs – this is inclusive of the salary pay award that was approved in April 2026 of 3.3% increase for all officers involved in the process including WRS officers, Democratic services and Legal officers.
- The number of Committees and Sub committees that take place across the year. In 25/26 there were:
 - 16 Licensing Sub Committees that were administered.
 - 6 Licensing Parent Committees that were administered.
- The total number of Taxi applications processed throughout the year for Redditch in 25/26 which were:
 - 175 HCV Applications processed
 - 228 PHV Applications processed
- Although driver fees are not included in the objection the below provides some context as to how many driver licenses were also processed in 25/26.

Dual licensed taxi and PHV drivers	231	260
Taxi only licensed drivers	43	0
PHV only licensed drivers	244	216
Both taxi and PHV drivers (two licences - not a dual)	0	0
Total taxi and PHV drivers	518	476

- 3.10 District Councils across Worcestershire will use a similar equation to determine a percentage increase for their Licensing Services. The percentage is not always the same as the figures used to determine a change (if any) will be specific to the individual district and will consider their licensing numbers, number of committees, individual recharge costs and overall income received into the Council.

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- 3.11 Members are asked to consider the information before them and propose any recommendations the Committee may wish to make in referring this matter to full Council for final determination.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed increase in fees and charges would cover the increase in costs to the Council. This includes salary costs, NI, all internal costs to the Council including the cost of sun committees, Parents Committees and Legal Services. Licensing fees and charges are non-profit making, and the relevant cost centres will reflect the operation of the service as cost-neutral. Any reduction in the proposed fees may lead to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing service running at a financial loss.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council may only charge a fee which enables the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing function to operate on a cost-neutral basis. Any excess income must be carried forward to the next financial year and the review of the fees at that point would need to reflect the carry-over.
- 5.2 The 1976 Act requires proposed variation to the fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle and operator licences to undergo a 28 day public consultation by way of notice within a local newspaper and at the Council's offices.
- 5.3 Full Council holds the responsibility for final determination of fees. Any objections made to the proposed fees must first be considered by the Licensing Committee and referred to full Council with any recommendations that the Licensing Committee may have.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 The licensing fees and charges review found it necessary to increase fees and charges for 26/27 due to inflationary pressures, however the Council also recognises the economic pressure on licence holders and business, so have attempted to keep the increases to a minimum.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 None identified.

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Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 The Council must have regard to its public sector equality duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In summary, Section 149 requires that a public authority, in the exercise of its functions, must have due regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.4 Section 149(7) of the Equality Act 2010 defines the relevant protected characteristics as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 6.5 The Council believes that the proposal to increase the licensing fees by the percentages outlined in section 3.2 above does not adversely impact or unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 To minimise the risk of challenge to the setting of fees and charges, they are designed to meet but not exceed the costs the Council reasonably believes will be incurred in issuing licences and administering the service.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Objection from Redditch Taxi Association

Appendix 2 – Objection from A2B Taxi and Contracts (Redditch) Ltd

Appendix 3 – Licensing Fees and Charges