



<b>Licensing and Regulatory Committee</b>	<b>Thursday, 14 January 2016</b>	<b>Matter for Information and Decision</b>
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**Title:** **Private Hire Operators' Licence Fees - Update**

**Author:** **Stephen Eyre – Interim Licensing Team Leader**

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update in respect of the matter of Private Hire Operators' (PHO) Licence Fees.

## **2. Recommendation**

This matter has been brought before this Committee as a discussion item.

It is either recommended that:

- a. The PHO licence fee structure should be introduced as proposed; or
- b. If the Committee decides that the decision is unsafe, the consultation process be restarted.

## **3. Information**

On 01 October 2015, a change in legislation meant that local authorities should issue Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Licences for 3 years and Private Hire Operators' (PHO) licences for 5 years.

As Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's dual badge was currently issued for 3 years, there were few changes to be made in that area. However, as PHO licences were issued for only 1 year, changes had to be made to the fee structure.

The law on changing PHO licence fees is quite straight forward with a Public Notice being placed in a local newspaper, which in this case was the Leicester Mercury and then waiting 28 days to see whether any representations are received. On receipt of any representations, the local authority should consider them and then has the option to amend the proposed fees: but whatever it decides, the decision must be implemented within 2 months from the end of the 28 day consultation period.

The new fee structure for PHO licences was proposed as follows:-

<b>Licence Period</b>	<b>Licence Fee</b>
1 year	£260.00
2 years	£483.00
3 years	£670.00
4 years	£820.00
5 years	£932.00

The Public Notice was placed in the 02 October 2015 edition of the Leicester Mercury. The representation period end-date was 06 November 2015.

During the representation period, an individual sent a lengthy email complaining about various issues relating to taxi licensing and the way the licence fees were calculated. He also wanted the proposed PHO licence fees to be withdrawn.

Unfortunately the only means of contacting this individual was through e-mail and on 17 December 2015 the Interim Licensing Team Leader, Stephen Eyre, wrote to him inviting him to withdraw his representation. No reply has been received.

Enquiries have been made to identify the individual in question. However, an Oadby and Wigston Borough Council licence holder of the same name has denied he is the author of any correspondence to the Council. The email address is equally non-specific: a generic email provided through aol.com.

In view of the lack of response to the invitation to withdraw, it is recommended by Officers that the PHO licence fee structure should be introduced as proposed. However, if the Committee decides that this decision is unsafe, then the consultation process will have to be restarted.

**Email:** [stephen.eyre@oadby-wigston.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.eyre@oadby-wigston.gov.uk)

**Tel:** (0116) 257 2677

<b>Implications</b>	
Equalities	No significant implications.
Financial	The fees that may be charged for licences are governed by legislation which requires the Council to cover up to its reasonable costs and does not charge a fee which intended to make a profit. The current gross annual budget for taxi licences is £53,750.
Legal	There is a legal requirement to consider and implement the proposed/revised fees within the prescribed objection period and to duly follow procedure should the consultation process be restarted.
Risk	Regulatory governance (CR6).