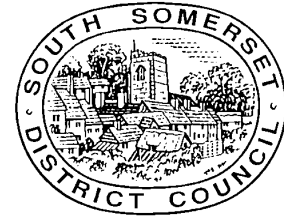


South Somerset District Council
Notice of Meeting



Licensing Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 12th April 2016

10.00 am

**Council Chamber B
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Jo Morris, Democratic Services Officer**, website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Monday 4 April 2016.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Ian Clarke'.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



Licensing Committee Membership

The following members are requested to attend the meeting:

Chairman: Martin Wale
Vice-chairman: David Recardo

Clare Aparicio Paul
Jason Baker
Neil Bloomfield
Dave Bulmer
Val Keitch

Jenny Kenton
Tony Lock
David Norris
Crispin Raikes
Wes Read

Garry Shortland
Alan Smith
Linda Vijeh

South Somerset District Council – Council Plan

Our focuses are: (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- Environment – We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- Homes – We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other

Members Questions on reports prior to the Meeting

Members of the Committee are requested to contact report authors on points of clarification prior to the Committee meeting.

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

Information for the Public

The Licensing Committee shall be responsible for those functions listed in part 3 of the Constitution as being the responsibility of the Committee. This will include licensing matters referred to it by officers, in accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation, such as contested public entertainment licences, and applications for taxi driver licences where the officer considers the application should be determined by members. The Committee shall also be responsible for all the functions assigned to it under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Statutory Licensing Committee has responsibility for all activities under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 except for policies and fees. Established under the Licensing Act 2003, it exercises the functions of the Licensing Authority which itself is the Council.

The Other Licensing Committee can be responsible for all other licensing matters. Established by the Council under discretionary power contained in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It is lawful for the membership of the two committees to be the same, but they are differently constituted and run under different powers.

Meetings of the Licensing Committee are held bi-monthly at 10.00am normally on the second Tuesday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way.

Licensing Committee agendas and minutes are published on the Council's website www.southsomerset.gov.uk

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

Licensing Committee

Tuesday 12 April 2016

Agenda

Preliminary Items

- 1. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th January 2016 and various Licensing Sub Committee meetings**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9. In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under any relevant code of conduct.

4. Public Participation at Committees

a) Questions/comments from members of the public

This is a chance for members of the public and representatives of Parish/Town Councils to participate in the meeting by asking questions, making comments and raising matters of concern.

Items for Discussion

- 5. Enforcement Update** (Pages 5 - 6)
- 6. SSDC Taxi Fare Formula Setting** (Pages 7 - 12)
- 7. Licensing Fees & Charges 2016 - 17** (Pages 13 - 21)
- 8. Date of Next Meeting** (Page 22)

Agenda Item 5

Enforcement Update

Executive Portfolio Holder: Peter Gubbins, Licensing Portfolio Holder
Asst Director: Laurence Willis, Assistant Director - Environment
Lead Officer: Colin Chown, Licensing Enforcement Officer
Contact Details: Colin.chown@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935)462135

Purpose of the Report

To update members on the work of the licensing enforcement team and the various issues they are currently involved with.

Recommendation

That the report is noted.

Background

Officers carry out a number of enforcement activities under the various legislative provisions that relate to licensing, in particularly with regard to taxi's and private hire drivers/vehicles and scrap metal dealers. This report seeks to brief members on the current issues that are being dealt with by the enforcement team.

Report Detail

Taxis & Private Hire Vehicles

The Enforcement Officer carried out weekly day time checks and several late night checks during the past six months. The checks were carried out in and around the centre of Yeovil and the purpose of them was to ensure compliance with the Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy and Bylaws.

During the previous six months, one taxi and private hire joint agency vehicle enforcement check with the Police was completed. Advice was given to drivers on various issues, further dates have been arranged with the police throughout the next three months.

Monthly taxi checks continue to be carried out at the Pen Mill, Yeovil Junction, Crewkerne and Castle Cary railway stations in order to ensure that vehicles which tend to use the ranks in and around the main towns are also subject to ad hoc inspections.

Sixty three taxi/private hire related complaints were received in the past six months, which resulted in the issuing of seven stop/prohibition notices, three for vehicle damage, two for tyres at or below minimum tread level and two for failure to provide proof of insurance.

The Enforcement Officer has issued penalty points on thirty two occasions for more minor issues in line with the Taxi Licensing Policy & Guidance:-

- Eight for failing to notify Licensing of driving endorsements.
- Ten for failing to declare endorsements on application for renewal of drivers badge.

- Three for leaving vehicle unattended on a taxi rank.
- Three for failing to display rear plate correctly.
- Two for failing to notify licensing of change of address.
- Two for failing to display a roof sign on a Hackney Carriage Vehicle
- One for failing to notify Licensing of an accident involving a Hackney Carriage Vehicle.
- One for not having badges whilst working.

Street Trading

There are seven permanent street traders; over one hundred and fifty consents for casual street trading were issued in the past six months.

Scrap Metal Dealers

The licensing enforcement officer carried out bi-monthly compliance inspections on all scrap metal collectors and three monthly inspections for scrap metal site licence holders to ensure they are compliant with the requirements of the Scrap Metal dealers Act.

Due to police restructuring the assistance of a dedicated Police Officer to accompany and assist the Enforcement Officer on these inspections is no longer available.

SSDC currently licence seventeen sites and twelve collectors

Financial Implications

None

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities and increase economic vitality and prosperity

Other Implications

None

Background Papers

None

Agenda Item 6

SSDC Taxi Fare Formula Setting

Executive Portfolio Holder: Peter Gubbins, Licensing Portfolio Holder
Assistant Director: Laurence Willis, Assistant Director - Environment
Lead Officer: Colin Chown, Licensing Enforcement Officer
Contact Details: Colin.chown@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462135

Purpose of the Report

To seek the Committee's approval of the formula for taxi fare setting, the revision of taxi passenger fares, and associated charges, within the South Somerset District.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee approves the proposed formula for taxi fare setting
2. The Committee approves the proposed increases in hackney carriage passenger fares and associated charges within the district, as set out at Appendix A to this report.
3. The Licensing Manager undertake the required statutory advertising of the proposed fares and charges.
4. In the event of any objections to the proposed fares being received during the statutory objection period, which are not resolved, then the Licensing Manager reviews any objections received in conjunction with the Chair of Licensing Committee.

South Somerset District Council – Fare Setting Formula

Following the introduction of the South Somerset Taxi & Private Hire Policy in April 2015, it was necessary to set up an annual review of taxi fares as required by the policy document.

The Licensing Manager has liaised with members of the taxi working group, in order to determine a formula that can be used to determine whether any fare increase is necessary in any given year.

The formula devised seeks to demonstrate the true costs of providing taxis and the cost per mile figure necessary to sustain this valuable public service economically.

It has been concluded that the most reliable method of obtaining up to date motoring costs is to use those published annually by the Automobile Association (AA). The advantages of using the AA figures are:

- The AA is a nationally recognised and accepted institution.
- The AA figures are well researched and reliable.
- The figures are more likely to be accepted by Officers and Committee members.
- The formula will also use Governmental figures for average earnings, again this is published on an annual basis in April.

The calculation will be as follows:

1. Government's April published annual average earnings figure¹
2. Average of the AA pence per mile total for standing charges and running costs in respect of petrol cars £25,000 to £32,000 and for diesel cars £26,000 to £36,000 both based on an average of 30,000 miles per annum.
3. Additional taxi insurance premium, over and above the AA insurance figure, currently approx £1,300.
4. The cost of a Council taxi drivers badge and vehicle licence.
5. Dead mileage figure, it is thought that given the nature of Hackney Carriage work in a large rural area like South Somerset, then this figure should be set at 40% of the total annual mileage, in this case 18,000. 40% is also the figure that is generally considered reasonable by HMRC.

$$\frac{1+2+3+4}{5}$$

5

Earnings

The economic cost of running a hackney carriage includes the drivers' earnings and this factor must be taken into account when setting the fare tariff. There is no reliable information on the earnings of taxi drivers and it is therefore proposed that the government's annual average earnings figure should be used.

Vehicle Costs

The AA publishes annually estimated vehicle standing charges and running costs based upon the fuel type and average mileage of a vehicle. This is a comprehensive index and consists of costs for road tax, insurance, depreciation, subscriptions, fuel, oil, tyres, servicing, repairs and replacements for a variety of vehicle types and distances travelled.

The formula above takes the average of the total of standing charges and running costs in pence per mile for petrol cars £25,000 - £32,000 pounds when new and for diesel cars £26,000 to £36,000. This would be 43.80² and 39.42³ giving an average of 41.61 pence per mile. The average figure is taken in order to reflect the mixed nature of the South Somerset taxi fleet.

As taxi insurance is more expensive than ordinary private motoring insurance, it is proposed that the extra cost above the AA figures be added. The actual cost will be calculated by taking the AA average for insurance for the above category vehicles as the base figure. Three quotations will then be obtained by council officers from local brokers for fully comprehensive insurance for both vehicle types in respect of a 3 year old vehicle with employed driver cover with one years no claims bonus for drivers average age 30 years with 5 years experience and no adverse accident claims. These quotations will then be averaged. The extra cost between the AA average figures and the averaged broker figures will be the addition taxi insurance premium.

¹

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2015provisionalresults>

² AA Motoring Costs petrol cars version 2 July 2014

³ AA Motoring Costs diesel cars 2014

The AA document includes a subscription fee, this is the cost of annual AA membership, this will be left in as it is assumed all drivers will have some form of breakdown cover.

The costs of Council drivers and vehicle licences will also be added into the calculation.

The calculation

Based upon the above criteria, the calculation would be as follows:

27,456 + 12480 + 1300 + 458 = £2.31 per mile.

18000

Legal Process for Fares setting

The legal background is that Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables a district council to set the fares charged within its area by hackney carriage (taxi) drivers for various distances over which paying passengers are conveyed, as well associated charges, as explained below.

In accordance with those legal provisions, proposed taxi fare increases must be advertised in the local press - and made available in the Council Offices - for a period of 14 days to allow for any objections to be made. If no objections are received, or any that are made are subsequently withdrawn, the proposed new fares become effective from the date specified in the notice.

If any objections are received which are not withdrawn, the new fares will not automatically take effect. In that case, to allow time for consideration of the objections, a new operative date for the fares must be set, which shall be no later than two months after the date of the close of the statutory objection period stated in the public notice. During this period objections would be considered and, if appropriate, the proposed fare tariff modified accordingly.

Subject to the Committee's approval, it is proposed to commence the statutory objection period, with the advertisement of the public notice, on the 21st April 2016, and ending 5th May 2016. Therefore, in accordance with the above, it is proposed that if no objections were received, the new fares would come into effect on the 5th May 2016.

Current comparative taxi fare levels for all taxi licensing authorities in the country are published each month in a national trade magazine.

Following the last increase in taxi fares in the district in April 2008, the Council's fare levels are now (from figures published in January 2016) placed 104th out of 365 authorities. Given that we are a large rural area with a large amount of dead mileage, it would be expected that our fares should generally be more expensive than urban areas which have less dead mileage. It is envisaged that South Somerset should generally be in the top 50, for this reason.

In order to progress matters, officers have prepared new draft proposed taxi passenger fare levels, as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Although the proposed fares will be published in draft in the press as part of the formal fare-setting process, Officers have sought some initial responses from representatives of the local taxi trade and have obtained informal feedback, which was supportive.

If approved by the Committee, such increases would move the Council's fares up to a position of 40th in the national list.

The Committee will note in Appendix A, that, as well as the actual passenger taxi fares based on distance conveyed, there are additional charges that taxi drivers can impose "...in connection with the hire of a vehicle...", as the legislation provides, which the Council can also determine.

For example, additional payment can be required for pets, luggage or additional passengers. Accordingly, increases to these additional charges, are therefore also proposed for the Committee's approval.

Environmental Implications

Any additional taxi journeys in the district will have a moderately positive effect on the environment because of the potential for fewer single car journeys, arising from the increased use of taxis, as a form of public transport.

Legal Implications

As set out in the report.

Equality Implications

None

Principal Consultees

Public consultation, by means of a statutory 14-day public objection period.

Background Papers

None.

Enclosures/Appendices

Appendix A: Table of Draft Proposed Hackney Carriage Passenger Fare Levels and Additional Charges

**Draft Proposed Hackney Carriage Passenger Fare Levels and Additional Charges
2016 – 17**

<p>Name : <input type="text" value="TARIFF 1"/></p> <p>Soiling charge: <input type="text" value="£100.00"/></p> <p>Wait: <input type="text" value="18"/> (secs)</p> <p>Flag fall: <input type="text" value="£4.00"/> A</p> <p>Initial yardage: <input type="text" value="1760"/> B</p> <p>Unit thereafter: <input type="text" value="176"/> C</p> <p>Price unit : <input type="text" value="0.25"/> D</p> <p>Initial Waiting Time (secs): <input type="text" value="180"/></p>	<p>Name : <input type="text" value="TARIFF 2"/></p> <p>Soiling charge: <input type="text" value="£100.00"/></p> <p>Wait: <input type="text" value="27"/> (secs)</p> <p>Flag fall: <input type="text" value="£6.00"/> A</p> <p>Initial yardage: <input type="text" value="1760"/> B</p> <p>Unit thereafter: <input type="text" value="176"/> C</p> <p>Price unit : <input type="text" value="0.35"/> D</p> <p>Initial Waiting Time (secs): <input type="text" value="270"/></p>	<p>Name : <input type="text" value="TARIFF 3"/></p> <p>Soiling charge: <input type="text" value="£100.00"/></p> <p>Wait: <input type="text" value="36"/> (secs)</p> <p>Flag fall: <input type="text" value="£8.00"/> A</p> <p>Initial yardage: <input type="text" value="1760"/> B</p> <p>Unit thereafter: <input type="text" value="176"/> C</p> <p>Price unit : <input type="text" value="0.5"/> D</p> <p>Initial Waiting Time (secs): <input type="text" value="360"/></p>
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Distance (miles)	TARIFF 1			TARIFF 2			TARIFF 3		
	Current	Proposed	% Change	Current	Proposed	% Change	Current	Proposed	% Change
Flag	£3.00	£4.00	33.33%	£4.50	£6.00	33.33%	£6.00	£8.00	33.33%
1	£3.88	£4.00	3.09%	£5.82	£6.00	3.09%	£7.76	£8.00	3.09%
2	£6.08	£6.50	6.91%	£9.12	£9.50	4.17%	£12.16	£13.00	6.91%
3	£8.28	£9.00	8.70%	£12.42	£13.00	4.67%	£16.56	£18.00	8.70%
4	£10.48	£11.50	9.73%	£15.72	£16.50	4.96%	£20.96	£23.00	9.73%
5	£12.68	£14.00	10.41%	£19.02	£20.00	5.15%	£25.36	£28.00	10.41%
6	£14.88	£16.50	10.89%	£22.32	£23.50	5.29%	£29.76	£33.00	10.89%
7	£17.08	£19.00	11.24%	£25.62	£27.00	5.39%	£34.16	£38.00	11.24%
8	£19.28	£21.50	11.51%	£28.92	£30.50	5.46%	£38.56	£43.00	11.51%
9	£21.48	£24.00	11.73%	£32.22	£34.00	5.52%	£42.96	£48.00	11.73%
10	£23.68	£26.50	11.91%	£35.52	£37.50	5.57%	£47.36	£53.00	11.91%
			129.46%			82.61%			129.46%

Running mile			
	T1	T2	T3
Present	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40
Proposed	£2.50	£3.50	£5.00

Surcharges & Extras (regardless of journey distance)	Maximum Charge applicable at all times
Use of boot – for luggage, shopping, prams and bicycles	£1.00 per item
Wheelchairs & Walking Frames/Aids	No Charge
Pets, Birds & Animals per cage and/or animal	£1.00 per item
Assistance Dogs	No Charge
Soiling of Vehicle	Any fair & reasonable fee up to £100

Agenda Item 7

Licensing Fees & Charges 2016 - 17

<i>Portfolio Holder:</i>	<i>Peter Gubbins, Licensing Portfolio Holder</i>
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	<i>Laurence Willis, Environment</i>
<i>Service Manager:</i>	<i>Nigel Marston, Licensing Manager</i>
<i>Lead Officer:</i>	<i>Nigel Marston, Licensing Manager</i>
<i>Contact Details:</i>	<i>Nigel.marston@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462150</i>

Purpose of the Report

To advise Licensing Committee of objections received to the proposed fees for private hire operators and hackney carriage drivers for the 2016/17 financial year. The fees having been set at a level to ensure that the Council's costs in providing the Licensing Service are being recovered in full, wherever the relevant legislation permits.

Public Interest

Whenever changes are proposed to taxi fees, it is recommended and confirmed by case law that where there is no specific requirement to consult on the changes conferred by statute, it would appear sensible for an authority to follow the same procedure as contained in Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s70. This relates specifically to fees for drivers and operators licences.

Recommendations

That Licensing Committee consider the objections and either

1. Modify the proposed fees and set a new date for these to take effect
2. Agree not to modify the proposed fees and set a new date for these to take effect.

Background

Members will recall that at the meeting of the Licensing Committee on the 19th February 2016, fees and charges for 2016/17 were agreed and recommended to Full Council as part of the budget setting process.

In accordance with the legislative requirements, once these fees were agreed by Full Council then they were required to follow the procedure outlined below.

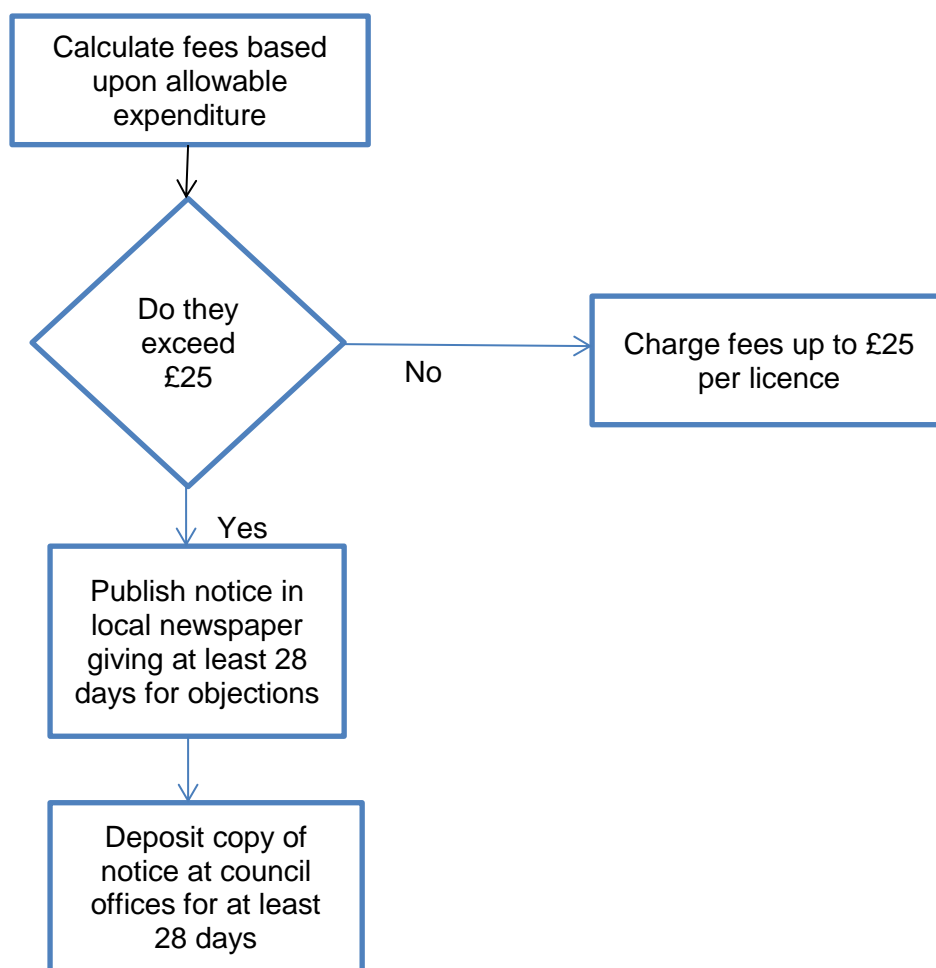
1. A notice must be published in a local newspaper, stating the proposed fees.
2. The notice to specify a date, not less than 28 days from the date of publication. The date has two functions;
 - (a) it is the date by which any objections must be lodged; and
 - (b) it is the date on which the revised fees will come into effect if either-
 - (i)no objections are received; or
 - (ii)any objections received have been withdrawn before that specified date.
3. It must also state where objections should be addressed, and how they can be made.
4. A copy of the notice must be available at the council offices for inspection, free of charge at all reasonable times.

5. Once the objection period (usually 28 days) has expired, if there have been no objections received or those received have subsequently been withdrawn, then the new fees take effect, either at the end of the objection period, or when the last objection is withdrawn.
6. If objections are made and not withdrawn, then the council must consider the objections.
7. In the light of the objections (although they must be considered, the Council does not have to vary the proposals as a result of them) the council then sets a second date, which cannot be more than two months after the first date specified, when the new fees come into force.

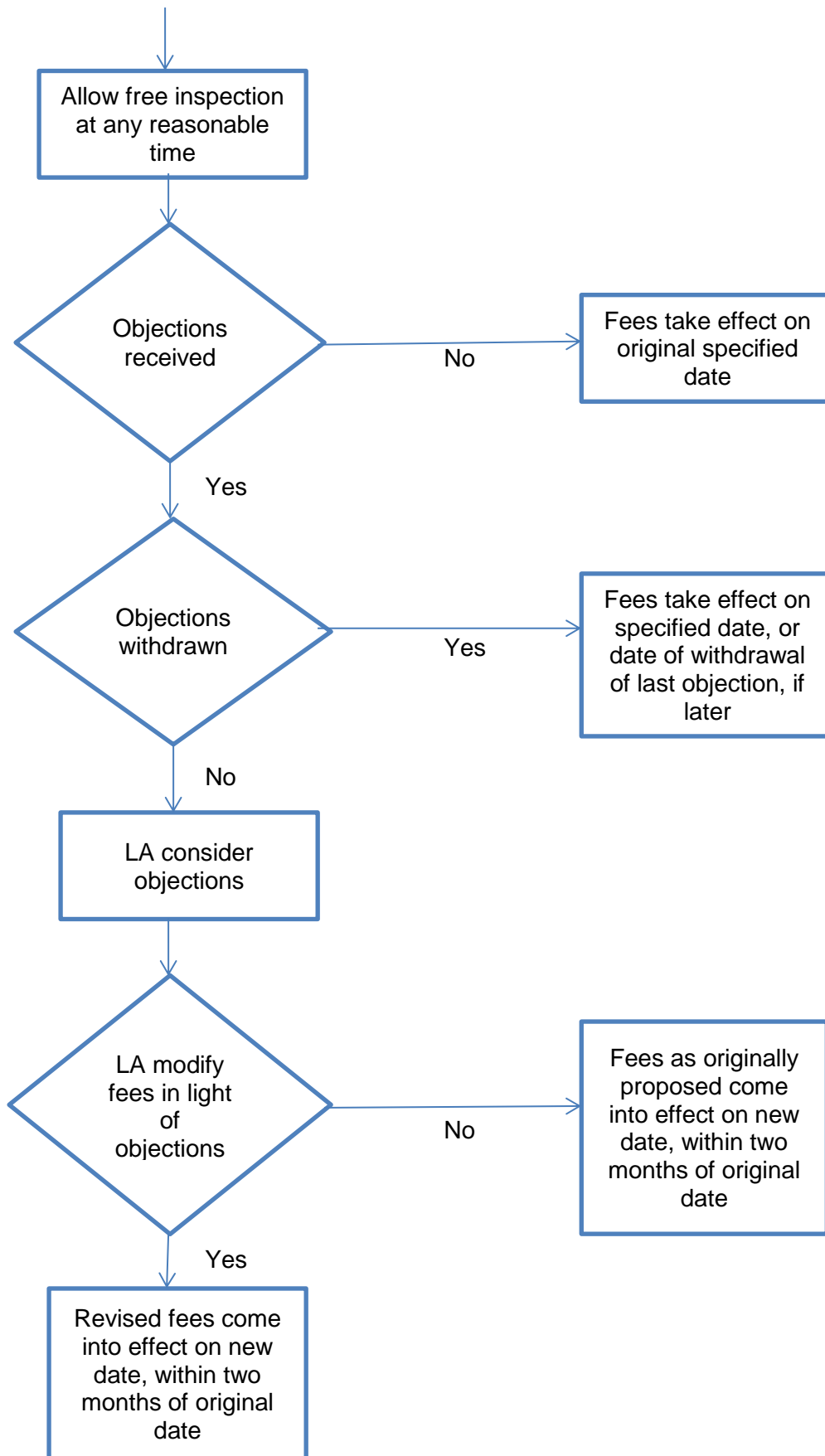
It would appear that any failure to comply with all these requirements would render the fees invalid, this is reinforced by the remarks of Schiemann LJ in the case of *Kelly v Liverpool City Council*¹ where, in relation to fees levied under s70 he stated:

“What is clearly important is that any proposed increase is advertised and considered in the way envisaged in subsections (70)(3)-(5).”

Flow Chart For Fees Set Under Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976



¹ [2003] EWCA Civ 197, [2003] 2 all ER 772



The Process

The agreed fees were set by Licensing Committee at a level to ensure total cost recovery as endorsed by Scrutiny Committee, District Executive and Full Council.

The fees were advertised by publishing a notice in the Western Gazette on the 25th February 2016.² The notice specified that all objections were required to be made in writing within 28 days of the publication date. All objections needed to be received by the 24th March 2016.

A notice was placed on the Statutory Notices board at the Council Offices on the 25th February 2016.

A total of three letters and one e-mail of objection have been received to the proposed fees, none of these objections have been withdrawn. The objections relate specifically to the cost of a private hire operators licence and to a hackney carriage/private hire drivers badge.

The objections are attached as Appendix 1.

The Councils solicitor has advised that these objections would best be considered by the Licensing Committee.

The Proposed Fees

Details of Licence/Fees	Fee 2015/16	VAT @ 20% if applicable	Fee 2016/17	Comments	Statutory or Discretionary
Private Hire Operator 3 yrs	£85.00	N/A	£820.00	Now 5 years Application processing £42 Consumables £44 Policy development £57 Enforcement (record checks) 2 hrs x 2 per year over 5 years at £33.88 (to include all on costs) = £677	Discretionary
Drivers badges 3 years	£80.00	N/A	£260.00	Application processing £43 Consumables £45 Administration £172	Discretionary

² The Licensing Manager has a copy of the paper notice.

Financial Implications

The proposed fees have been set at a level to ensure full cost recovery, any changes to the fee level will impact on the licensing budget. The fee setting method and calculations were designed in conjunction with the finance and legal teams.

Council Plan Implications

This proposal will have an effect on theme 5 – It will enable the Council to continue to deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Privacy Impact Assessment

None required

Background Papers

Licensing Committee 09/06/15 & 19/01/16
Scrutiny Committee 01/12/15
District Executive 03/12/15
Full Council 25/02/15

Nigel Marston,
Licensing Manager,
South Somerset District Council
The Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil,
Somerset

Sarah Langdon
Crewkerne Taxis
3 North Street
Crewkerne
Somerset
TA18 7AJ

25TH February 2016

Dear Mr Marston,

With Reference to the proposed changes to the taxi operating fees.

I am totally opposed to such an unjustified dramatic change in the operating costs detailed in the Western Gazette today.

Have you taken in to consideration that the majority of taxi firms in South Somerset are small businesses or in fact sole traders?? What warrants such an increase in the fees?

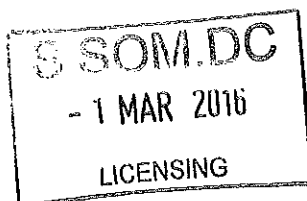
We have taken small increases over the years which we have accepted as par for the course but for a sudden unexpected jump it's a lot to accept. I feel you need to look at the wider picture and take in to consideration the actual service taxi operators and drivers provide to the community .

I believe a sudden dramatic increase in operating fees would be detrimental to the taxi trade within South Somerset and should be reconsidered to better suit the economic climate.

Yours Sincerely



Sarah Langdon



Nigel Marston
Licensing Manager
South Somerset District Council
The Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 2HT

Charles w Apps
CandS Taxis
5 North Street
Crewkerne
Somerset
TA18 7AJ

25th February 2016

Dear Sir

Ref: The article in today's Western Gazette, propose changes to taxi fees.

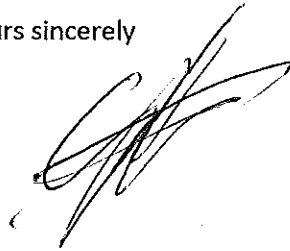
I strongly oppose the changes. I am beginning to think that the council want to get rid of all the taxis in south somerset.

By adding all these extra costs the council are making a difficult job even harder.

Putting these extra costs on drivers will make it harder for drivers to maintain their vehicles also it has been made difficult to replace vehicles with 5 year age limit on new licences and having to have brand new hackney carriage vehicles wheel chair accessible (I have never been asked for one in 17 years of taxi driving).

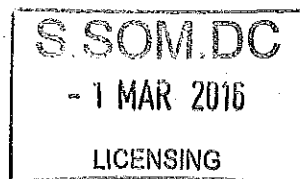
I think the operating fees should stay as they are. Also I think the council should realise that this is south somerset not London or Bristol.

Yours sincerely



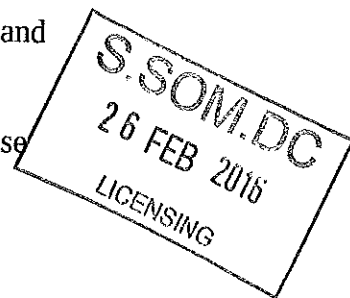
C.W.APPS.

C.and S. Taxis



Nigel Marston
Licensing Manager
South Somerset District Council
The Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 2HT

Roger A Woodland
CR Taxis
The Cottage
De Combe House
Mount Pleasant
Crewkerne
Somerset
TA17 8AH



25th February 2016

Dear Mr Marston

Ref: Proposed changes to taxi operating fees.

I am writing to you regarding the proposed rate changes as detailed in the Western Gazette this week.

I very much oppose the changes that you have specified and fail to see how you can justify increasing our operating costs by over 50% per annum.

Each year there have been various increases in one or two different areas and, we have had to absorb these costs. What you are proposing now is a substantial increase across the board.

Due to various rule changes that have been implemented recently additional new costs have been brought in, i.e. 6 monthly MOT checks etc.

Taxi meter rates, which most private hire operators work in line with to remain competitive, have not been increased since 2008.

I feel that it is time that consideration is given to operating taxi drivers in your district. I believe that operating fees should remain unchanged for the foreseeable future, until such time as a more favourable economic climate exists.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Roger A Woodland.

R A Woodland
CR Taxis

To: <peter.gubbins@southsomerset.gov.uk>
Subject: TAXI LICENCE INCREASES 2016/17

Dear Sir,

After some research on the council web site I have found you are the "Portfoilo Holder" for Taxi Licensing; I am part of the Management Team and also drive for a family firm in Wincanton. We were disgusted to find the proposed changes to pricing listed in the back corner of the Western Gazette. We were even more disgusted when we worked out the increases. How can you justify putting the cost of a Private Hire Operators Licence up by six times, £ 85 to £ 820 !!! Equally how can you justify a 3 year Drivers Licence increasing from £ 80 to £ 260 !!!

It is " economic suicide" and will make a large hole in the Private Hire Fleet and the number of Drivers available. Why are these operations suddenly taking so much extra money to run.

Over and above this, now that licencing has been moved back to Yeovil from Wincanton Town Council we are being expected to make a 30 round trip to Yeovil every time we have a vehicle/driver application despite being told we would be able to complete the paperwork at Churchfields in Wincanton.

I would welcome a reply as soon as possible as we shall now have to look at the future of our vehicles and drivers.

--

Yours Faithfully
Ian Trotter.



Agenda Item 8

Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the Licensing Committee will take place on Tuesday 7th June 2016 at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.