



General Licensing Committee

Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

Derek Beer (Chair), Louise Bown (Vice-Chair), Les Fry, Jill Haynes, Jack Jeanes, Cathy Lugg, Craig Monks, David Morgan, Emma Parker, David Shortell, Jane Somper, Andrew Starr, Claudia Webb, Kate Wheller and Sarah Williams

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services Meeting Contact 01305 224877 - john.miles@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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Agenda

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. MINUTES	
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28 th January 2026.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	

Public Document Pack If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer Public Document Pack Public Document Pack in advance of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below. Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to John.miles@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Monday 23rd February 2026.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question, and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO TAXI LICENSING FEE INCREASE FOR 2026/2027

5 - 12

To consider the responses and agree a recommendation to full Council to adopt the new fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences.

6. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

7. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

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General Licensing Committee

25 February 2026

Consideration of Objections to Taxi Licensing Fee Increase for 2026/7

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s):

N/A

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe, Director of Public Health & Prevention

Report author and job title: John Newcombe

Email: John.newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Report status: Public

Executive summary

In accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, proposed fees for Private Hire Operator and Vehicle licences must be published in a local newspaper to allow for objections prior to adoption. These fees were advertised in the Dorset Echo on 9 December, and all hackney carriage and private hire licence holders were provided with the full schedule of fees, including driver charges via newsletter. This report sets out the objections received for consideration.

1. Recommendation

To consider the responses and agree a recommendation to full Council to adopt the new fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences

2. Reason for the recommendation

The fees have not been raised since 2022 when they were calculated on the cost of running the service.

3. The Fees for Licences

- 3.1 Taxi licence fees were last set in 2022 when they were calculated based on the costs of running the service including, processing applications, materials for badges and plates and additional costs including staffing costs, office costs, database management, website maintenance, policy development, training, legal advice and enforcement were also included.

- 3.2 [The Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance for Licensing Authorities in England](#) issued by the Department for Transport states at section 3.4 that:

“It is essential to a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector that those administering and enforcing the regime are well-resourced. The licensing model is intended to be self-funding through licensing fees and it is expected that licensing authorities seek to provide a well-resourced system at the lowest cost to licensees. Licensing authorities should regularly review their fees to reflect changes to costs, both increases and reductions.”

- 3.3 The increases being proposed align with the general rises in Council fees and remains significantly below inflation since 2022.

Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Increase
Taxi - Vehicle - New Vehicle Fee	190	200	5.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - New Vehicle Fee (Weymouth Vehicles)	240	260	8.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - Renewal Fee	183	200	9.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - Renewal Fee (Weymouth)	223	240	7.60%
Taxi - Vehicle - Plate Holder	15	16	6.70%
Taxi - Vehicle - Replacement Plate	26.5	28	5.70%
Taxi - Vehicle - Temporary Plate (Accident related)	79	83	5.10%
Taxi - Driver - New Driver 3 year licence	192	210	9.40%
Taxi - Driver - Renewal 3 year licence	142	150	5.60%
Taxi - Driver - New Driver 1 year licence	163	180	10.40%
Taxi - Driver - Renewal 1 year licence	113	120	6.20%
Taxi - Driver - Replacement Badge	16	17	6.30%
Taxi - Operator - 5 year licence	416	440	5.80%
Taxi - Operator - 1 year licence	118	130	10.20%
Subsequent Knowledge Test	52.5	55.5	5.70%

- 3.4 The average percentage price increase proposed equates to an additional 7% income for the 2026/27 financial year.
- 3.5 The service is currently on target to be running a deficit of £22,902 for the current financial year and the proposed increase will reverse that position and potentially give a small operating surplus of £11,083 for 2026/27.

- 3.6 When the income and expenditure figures are assessed over the three year rolling programme however the service is in deficit to £142,978 however the majority of that deficit occurred in the 2024/25 financial year where income levels were particularly weak resulting in a deficit of £87,999. Officers consider this to be an anomaly which is not expected to be repeated. A copy of the accounts is included at **Appendix A**.
- 3.7 Under section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 fees for vehicle and operator licences must be advertised in a local paper for two weeks and any objections considered for any fees being proposed that are over £25. This section does not apply to driver licences.
- 3.8 The fees for the vehicle and operator licences were advertised in the Dorset Echo on the 9 December and a newsletter was sent out to all the holders of the 3188 taxi and private hire licences advising them of all of the proposed fee increases.
- 3.9 There have been 5 representations made regarding the proposed increase on the fees, all received as a response from the consultation with the licence holders. Officers will present the representations along with any responses to the Committee at the meeting;
- a) I would like to formally state that I have no objection, to the increase. As I believe that this is a normal practice, that is inline with inflation.
 - b) I strongly object to your license fee increases most taxi drivers and companies are already finding it difficult with the cost of living as it is and we have noticed the lack of business in 2025 however if this goes ahead we will have no choice to put our prices up which will also include putting the prices up for school runs that we do for council . And also, I'm sure council tax will go up along with dropping off cost at airports costing us and ulez costs. I feel this will lead to some taxi drivers giving up the job altogether
 - c) I would like to object to the proposed fee increases.
 - d) I'm writing to state my objections to the proposed Taxi Licensing fee increases based on several factors.

Since the last major revision of Dorset's Taxi Licensing policy in 2021, drivers and operators alike have seen a number of problems navigating ambiguous and incomplete local legislation with dwindling resources being offered to clarify and signpost enquiries to satisfactory outcomes.

Emails are currently being responded to with automated read receipts with up to 10 working days or two-week lead times for replies.

Phone lines available only between 0900 and 1200 and often reliant on staff who are expected to be a jack of all trades when it comes to licensing enquiries.

Previous FOI requests have informed drivers that the majority of the license fee are allocated to cover enforcement, however little to no enforcement is seen at least in the Weymouth and Portland area.

The recent online upgrades to Licensing have amalgamated all previous systems and in theory have streamlined the way in which licensing applications are handled and processed.

Plate printing and shipping is now outsourced to a third party, thus eliminating the need and budget for backstock which presumably is a net cost saving.

The single largest frustration has been a lack of specialisation in Taxi licensing and law when enquiries are made, inconsistent responses and poor communication as seen by the December 5th Newsletter (sent December 9th) which was poorly formatted, evidently not spell-checked or proofread before sending; it also arrived in inboxes at 3pm on the day of the public notice in the local paper presenting little opportunity for drivers and license holders to even know of the existence of a right to comment or object.

I regularly hear from 'veteran' drivers about the days where a local office would hold walk in appointments and deal with enquiries there and then, licenses and plates being issued on the spot with relevant paperwork and while I understand this wouldn't be compatible with the new workflow, it represents a much more cohesive working relationship between drivers and Dorset Council.

I personally object to any proposed increases until we as License holders see improvements in the above metrics to rebuild confidence in our local authority's ability to maintain a professional and efficient department. Until these areas are under control, given the increased driver operating costs with Private Hire circuit fees rising to cover minimum wage/ Employer NI increases, private and public hire insurance increases and general cost of living increases, I would like to see more value for my money before simply handing over more to a struggling department.

- e) Just to say, I don't agree to these fee increases. My main concern is that since the last fee increases, services have got worse. Office hours are reduced; communications are less frequent and take much longer to obtain replies – with some communications by email stating 7-14 days for a response!

4. Financial Implications

The funding for the preparation and consultation of the fees and charges came from existing budgets. The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing must be self-funding, not be a drain on the taxpayer and not make a profit, these fees will achieve this. There are no further financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

6. Well-being and Health Implications

None

7. Other Implications

There are no implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council

8. Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

9. 8. Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Accounts for the Taxi Licensing Service 2023 to 2027

11. Background Papers

[Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#)

[Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

[LGA guidance on locally set licensing fees | Local Government Association](#)

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26/27 (estimated)

Income 26/27 (estimated)	
Hackney Carriage Fees	158,272
Private Hire Fees	393,301
Fees & Charges	
Total income 26/27	551,573

Expenditure 26/27 (estimated)	
Staffing costs	298,983
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	31,584
Total Expenditure 26/27	540,491

26/27 Income and expenditure **11,083**

Rolling total **-131,895**

25/26 (estimated)

Income 25/26 forecast to year end	
Hackney Carriage Fees	147,918
Private Hire Fees	367,571
Fees & Charges	
Total income 25/26	515,489

Expenditure 25/26	
Staffing costs	296,958
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	31,510
Total Expenditure 25/26	538,391

25/26 Income and expenditure **- 22,902**

Rolling total **-142,978**

24/25

Income 24/25	£
Hackney Carriage Fees	140,003
Private Hire Fees	296,541
Fees & Charges	915
Total income 24/25	437,458

Expenditure 24/25	£
Staffing costs	279,454
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	36,080
Total Expenditure 24/25	525,457

24/25 Income and expenditure **- 87,999**

Rolling total **-120,076**

23/24

Income 23/24	£
Hackney Carriage Fees	139,359
Private Hire Fees	314,581
Fees & Charges	
Total income 23/24	453,940

Expenditure 23/24	£
Staffing costs	259,454
Corporate Recharges	204,943
Taxi Specific expenditure	21,620
Total Expenditure 23/24	486,017

23/24 Income and expenditure **-32,077**

Rolling total **-32,077**

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