

Appendix H

Monkey Survey Consultation Responses

Comment Number 1 Date Thursday, November 19, 2015 10:55am

Q1: Please indicate which of the following applies to you:

Operator

Q2: Please indicate which of the proposed changes you wish to comment on and use the box below to give us details and let us know if and how the said changes may affect and/or cause you hardship so that we can consider how to proceed.

Operator renewal (5 years)

Your comments I feel that any increase in costs for operators licences will push certain operators and people wishing to start in the business to run 'under the radar' without the relevant licenses. There are too many operators/taxi vehicles in Northampton and competition is fierce so any increase will definitely impact some operators. I do feel that the annual payment plan would work well, maybe a monthly plan (as the DVLA carry out) would be easier for people with smaller outgoing payments.

Comment Number 2 Thursday, November 19, 2015 1:07am

Q1: Please indicate which of the following applies to you:

Operator

Q2: Please indicate which of the proposed changes you wish to comment on and use the box below to give us details and let us know if and how the said changes may affect and/or cause you hardship so that we can consider how to proceed.

Operator renewal (5 years)

Your comments So why is it being changed from an annual payment to a five year payment. If it's to save money why am I being charged more for it. I have been paying £220 a year, these new price proposals put the fee up to over £300 a year. That in my book is a big Con. Surely if we are having to pay all this money in advance, then we should get it cheaper.

Comment Number 3 Monday November 23, 2015 18:41pm

Q1: Please indicate which of the following applies to you:

Operator

Q2: Please indicate which of the proposed changes you wish to comment on and use the box below to give us details and let us know if and how the said changes may affect and/or cause you hardship so that we can consider how to proceed.

Operator renewal (5 years)

Payment Arrangement Fee

Your comments the proposed operator fee penalises the single vehicle operator with significant increase. Also with a five year scheme there should be administration savings this scheme will increase my licence by £85 to £95 per yr depending if the annual payment fee is used.

Q3: Do you have any other comments?

I will be submitting my concerns in writing to the The Guildhall as noted in the Northampton Herald and post of November 19th 2015

Comments Number 4 Tuesday December 08, 2015 11:40am

Q1: Please indicate which of the following applies to you:

- Operator

Q2: Please indicate which of the proposed changes you wish to comment on and use the box below to give us details and let us know if and how the said changes may affect and/or cause you hardship so that we can consider how to proceed.

- Operator renewal (5 years)
- New Operator Licence Application/Grant Fee (5 Year)
- Payment Arrangement Fee

Your comments As an operator we have made an attempt to justify the fee itself and any increase that is apparently being introduced as a result of the five year licence. The fact that one licence will be issued as opposed to five would seem to indicate that there should be a reduction in the fee, not an increase. Driver licences are also now dealt with, using the on line application service, reducing administration, resulting in further cost saving. It is also apparent that there has been a significant reduction in staffing levels in the Licensing Department at the Council to the detriment of the service. This is blatantly apparent in both Administration and Enforcement. When all other councils are increasing staff levels to guard against problems encountered in other parts of the country, some very close to the borough boundary, Northampton Borough Council in their wisdom have been reducing staff levels. This must reduce the cost to the council. Enforcement has become almost nonexistent. There was a suggestion that neighbourhood wardens (subject of a recent FOI request) would be carrying out low level enforcement. We would be interested to know; what is low level enforcement? From what part of the legislation (LG(MP) Act 1976, do these neighbourhood wardens derive their powers to carry out that enforcement. We have been unable to find any Operator or driver who has been subject of this enforcement. This is not happening!!! This is a way of trying to justify the current fee. Private Hire drivers and operators are not responsible for paying the wages of neighbourhood wardens. Management staff have also either moved on or retired from the service reducing the cost of the licensing function even further. As far as we are aware the current manager divides her time between Environmental Health and Licensing. A significant amount of income is derived through the fees charged for the licensing of Hackney/Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators. This is excluding other income received from the licensing of those premises involved in the sale and supply of alcohol and, other licenses issued by the council's licensing department. We as an operator feel we do not receive value for money. This is in no way a criticism of those working in the licensing department; they do their best with the constraints levelled upon them mainly due to an obvious shortage of staff. It is a criticism, however, of those not now involved with the service, that they have left those remaining in the precarious position where they will find it difficult to justify those fees being introduced and those already being levelled at the trade. (A £50.00 transaction fee cannot be justified as any payment made would be made using the BACS system, this on most accounts is fee free.) The Licensing Committee will be aware that all income received from the issue of licenses can only be spent on the service as provided; this cannot currently be the case. Those within the trade feel that they are being singled out to provide income through fees that cannot be justified. It may be the case that the only way to challenge these fees is through legal process. Other authorities have made the mistake of dismissing this course of action. (Cardiff City Council has recently been challenged on the level of fees and has been ordered to reimburse drivers and operators where they have been deemed by the court to overcharge. Their current fee is included in those comparisons below.) To emphasise the point there are comparisons I would draw the committees attention to, some of those authorities have already decided on their 5 year Operator Licence fee others have made a proposal in respect of the fee. Authority 5 year Fee £'s Birmingham City 2728.00 Bedford 1575.00 * Cardiff City 350.00 * Derbyshire 400.00 East Cambridge 380.00 * East Hants 352.00 (proposed) Leeds City Council 300.00 Monmouthshire 727.00 Northumberland 502.00 Bolton Borough Council 5719.00 (Over 50 vehicles) * Salford City Council 410.00 (Over 25 vehicles) * South Bucks 1413.00 (Over 5 vehicles) * Northampton 1450.00 – 20,650.00 (Proposed) An Operator's licence in the City of Birmingham would cost almost 75% less than its equivalent licence in Northampton.??? An Operator's Licence in the City of Cardiff at £350.00 is the lowest in the table. How can a fee per vehicle be justified on an operator when there is already a fee charged in respect of that vehicle. Two charges for the same vehicle? How does this reflect in the cost of the administration of the Operators licence.

Q3: Do you have any other comments?

7.1 Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to charge fees in respect of private hire operators' licences. The Council must set the fees for these licences on the basis that it only recovers costs which it is entitled statutorily to recover.

Comment Number 5 Tuesday December 08, 2015 4:41pm

Q1: Please indicate which of the following applies to you:

- Operator

Q2: Please indicate which of the proposed changes you wish to comment on and use the box below to give us details and let us know if and how the said changes may affect and/or cause you hardship so that we can consider how to proceed.

- Operator renewal (5 years)
- New Operator Licence Application/Grant Fee (5 Year)
- Payment Arrangement Fee

• **Your comments** As an operator with one vehicle, I find these proposals a hefty double whammy in terms of operator licensing costs. The current operator licence for my business is I believe £230 - under the new proposals it averages out at £305 a year for five years. What justifies an annual increase of around 30 per cent? What has changed to now warrant charging that amount a year? Added to that, it appears you are now looking for operators to pay the full £1,525 up front? This does nothing for year on year cash flow for small businesses, what happens if you close your business within the five years? Is this then part refunded? I take it an instalment scheme could be introduced but presumably that would incur an extra charge, otherwise you would simply revert to the status quo, albeit with this hefty fee increase? Single-vehicle operators are hit particularly hard - as these proposals stand, they are hardly seen to be supportive of small business in the town. The fee increase and the changes to the payment arrangement fee strike me as pure greed. I hope you will come to a decision which will mitigate these unwelcome proposals.

PLAT NUM CLASS

Platinum Class
Mr S A Hardy

The Licensing
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

24 November 2015

Dear Sirs,

Objection to Increase: Proposed Private Hire Operators Licence Fees

PH Operator Platinum Class PH0021

I refer to the above as appearing on both the NBC web site and the Herald and Post newspaper 19th November 2015.

Whilst economy of scale and government direction seem to be factors in these proposals the massive increase I can expect is outrageous (43%). Single vehicle operators are the only banding to be subjected to this massive per vehicle penalisation, is this a way to reduce the small operator I ask myself.

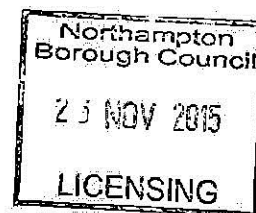
Please inform me how for exactly the same service you can justify an increase from £220.00 to £315.00 (including 5yr arrangement fee)

I show a table of my calculations on the reverse

I hope further thought and consideration will be given for single vehicle operators such as myself. I await your response

Yours faithfully

Stephen A Hardy



Current Fees			
Bandings	£	Low	High
1	220		£220.00
2	5	£165.00	£66.00
6	20	£73.33	£22.00
21	30	£26.19	£18.33
31	40	£21.29	£16.50
41	50	£18.78	£15.40
51	60	£17.25	£14.67
61	70	£16.23	£14.14
71	80	£15.49	£13.75
81	90	£14.81	£13.33
91	100	£14.29	£13.00
101	110	£13.86	£12.73
111	120	£13.51	£12.50
121	130	£13.22	£12.31
131	140	£12.98	£12.14
141	150	£12.77	£12.00
151	160	£12.58	£11.88
161	170	£12.42	£11.76
171	180	£12.28	£11.67
181	190	£12.15	£11.58
191	200	£12.04	£11.50
201	210	£11.94	£11.43
225	220	£11.11	£11.36
226	250	£12.17	£11.00

Proposed Fees						Per Vehicle Annually			Change per vehicle annually	
5 yr Fee	5 r /vehicle	Annual avg Fee	Total £	Bandings	Low	High	Low	High		
£1,450.00			£1,450.00	0						
£1,450.00	£75.00	£50.00	£1,575.00	1		£315.00		£95.00		
£1,450.00	£150.00	£50.00	£1,650.00	2	5	£165.00	£0.00	£0.00		
£1,450.00	£300.00	£50.00	£1,800.00	6	20	£60.00	£18.00	£4.00		
£1,450.00	£600.00	£50.00	£2,100.00	21		£20.00	£6.19			
£1,450.00					50				£8.40	£9.93
£1,450.00	£1,200.00	£50.00	£2,700.00	51		£10.59			£6.67	
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£1,450.00										
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£1,450.00										
£1,450.00	£9,600.00	50	£11,100.00	301	400	£7.38	£5.55			
£1,450.00	£19,200.00	50	£20,700.00	401		£10.32				