

## **Appendix 5 – Response and comments to proposed increase in 1 year driver and vehicle fees certain taxi fees**

### **Council's Legal Response**

Dear all,

I have been asked to respond to your comments and objections concerning the proposed licence fees and in particular those relating to driver licence fees.

The fees are set in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions with the legitimate aim of covering the costs of administration in relation to the service. It should be noted that there has been no fee increase for 3 years which demonstrates that costs have been kept under control and that the impact of inflationary pressures, (latest CPI is at 3%), have been managed carefully by the service.

With regard to the increase in drivers 1 year licence fees, in line with the yearly review of running costs it has become apparent that the costs of issuing a 1 year licence are disproportionately higher than that of a 2/3 year licence and so unfortunately these fees do need to increase. This is a legitimate aim to cover the cost of providing the service and is not unlawful discrimination. This fee structure is on a par with neighbouring authorities fee structures e.g. Portsmouth.

It has been confirmed that the enforcement work concerning out of district drivers with TFL has not been included in the licence fees.

Members will discuss the proposed fees at the licensing committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November and will be made aware of the comments and objections raised by the trade.

Yours sincerely,

### **Trade's comments**

Martin,

I hope that it is not too late to object to these proposals. The only increase that I can see here is a £20 increase on the yearly licence of drivers licences. The only drivers that will no doubt be affected by this will be drivers over the age of 65. Can you tell me why you have decided to victimise these drivers as it isn't their fault that they have to re-licence annually. It is a condition of licencing that forces them to have a medical every year which can cost between £80-£150 already. There is no problem with the medical as it is good to know that the driver concerned is fit to drive. This "penalty" on these specific drivers smacks of "agism" and as the shop steward of Unite in Brighton I object wholeheartedly. If there is to be a rise then it should be shared equally among all of us and not drivers 65 and over. Can you also please place my objection before the licensing Committee on 23rd November 2017 prior to them voting on the matter?

Yours Sincerely,

John Oram

Good point John

What will be interesting to hear is why the costs have gone up and why drivers are expected to pay them.

Is it because of a certain operator causing a massive increase in complaints for the HCO to handle?

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Surely they are the ones that should be paying this massive increase not law abiding local drivers?

Jon Smith GMB NOC Vice Chair

Hi John & John,

Just finished work on a suitably wintery night even though it's still Autumn, allegedly!

I'd be extremely interested in seeing the accounts ("Ring Fenced Budget") upon which these increases are based (perhaps the past 3 years for comparison) in the spirit of true transparency, so that we (the Trade) can audit them and what's more ascertain why there should be such a steep "Spike" in the increase of Brighton & Hove Licence Fees this year!?

I share your concern(s) regarding what appears to be the disproportionate nature of the increase in respect of drivers aged over 60, which I concur, may amount to ageism!

Whilst on the subject of Licensing fees, we (Unite) would also like to offer questions regarding the financing of enforcement together with the investigation of complaints against vehicles and drivers licensed many miles away, but working in Brighton - and the possible contra/re-charging of these fees to the relevant Council's (Licensing Authority's) budget! Although, we have been assured that there have been no complaints regarding the Uber operation locally!?

I've no doubt the City Council will be Pleased to supply such information, in the true spirit of open democracy, prior to the consideration or resolution of any new schedule of Taxi/PH Licence fees.

Kind Regards, Sean Ridley  
Asst. Secretary Unite the Union – South-East Region (Cab Section).

Dear Martin

Thank you for your email on Proposed Licence Fees.

Firstly I unable recall if this was mentioned at the last Trade Forum meeting a couple of weeks ago?

If it was then I was not aware that this was going to be put to the Licensing Committee meeting in November or if this was mentioned as a draft proposal for next year for the following Licensing Committee meeting in February ready for the new financial year in April 2018?

However I am unable to recall if the details were made available about the proposed increases where as at previous trade meetings the full details of any proposed increase in fees were made available at Trade Forum meetings for a full discussion.

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This is very much like the fleeting mention of the proposed 'Low Emission Policy' that was briefly touched on and where the trade at the meeting sat up and asked is to where exactly was the trade consultation on this matter.

This resulted in the 'Low Emission Policy' being removed from the November Licensing Committee meeting and an extraordinary Trade Forum meeting being arranged in December for full consultation.

### **Driver Licence Increases**

John Oram of Unite has already made some very good points on the issue of the yearly hackney carriage driver licence being increased by 20% and indeed this is the same as the yearly private hire driver licence increasing by 19.7% for those drivers who have reached the age of 65 who require an annual licence which would certainly look like ageism as John has suggested.... and on behalf of the GMB I would like to back those points made.

### **Could you please provide a breakdown as to why the council considers to:**

1: Increase the hackney carriage and private hire driver fees?

2: Increase the fees by 20% and as to how this figure was arrived at?

### **Fee Increases**

Can you please give complete assurance that the proposed fee increases have nothing to do with the extra work that the HCO has had to take on with regards to complaints about private hire vehicles that are not licensed by Brighton & Hove who are predominantly working in the city.

### **Fee Increase Deferral**

As no consultation has taken place with trade on the full details of the proposed increase in fees I would respectfully ask that this matter should be deferred for the November Licensing Committee meeting and put on the agenda for the extraordinary Trade Forum meeting in December so the trade can have a full debate on the details.

Thank you

With regards

Andrew Peters  
Secretary  
GMB Brighton & Hove Taxi Section

