

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date and Time: FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2026, AT 10.00 AM

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA

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PUBLIC INFORMATION:

This agenda can be viewed online (<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk>). It can also be made available on audio tape, in Braille and large print.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. The seating capacity of our Council Chamber public gallery is limited under fire regulations to 22.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's [public participation scheme](#):

- (a) on items within the General Purposes and Licensing Committee's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to attend the meeting, or speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme, should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday, 3 March 2026.

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
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AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2026 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive any public participation in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme.

4. TAXI LICENSING FEES 2026 – 2027 (Pages 3 - 18)

To consider proposed Taxi Licensing fees for 2026/27, following consultation.

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To:

Councillors

Neil Tungate (Chairman)
Richard Young (Vice-Chairman)
Steve Clarke
Jack Davies
Philip Dowd
Allan Glass
David Harrison

Councillors

David Hawkins
Nigel Linford
Colm McCarthy
Dave Penny
Alvin Reid
Janet Richards

General Purposes and Licensing Committee - 6 March 2026

Taxi Licensing Fees 2026 – 2027

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report presents the objections received during the statutory consultation period for the proposed fees and charges for the taxi and private hire licensing function.</p> <p>The General Purposes and Licensing Committee is asked to consider the objections and set the scale of fees for 2026/27.</p>
Recommendations	<p>1. That Members of General Purposes and Licensing Committee consider the objections made during the public consultation period in respect of the proposed fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences.</p> <p>2. That the General Purposes and Licensing Committee set the recommended scale of fees and charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences for the financial year 2026/27, effective from 1 April 2026 as per Appendix 1.</p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The local authority is able to recover the costs associated with undertaking its licensing functions, where these fees are not statutorily set. The cost of providing these functions has been fully costed, and proposed fees have been adjusted where necessary.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Dan Poole
Strategic Director(s)	Peter Matthew - Strategic Director of Housing & Communities (Interim)

Officer Contact	<p>Christa Ferguson Licensing Manager 023 8028 5352 christa.ferguson@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Joanne McClay Service Manager – Environmental and Regulation 023 8028 5325 joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk</p>
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Introduction

1. As part of the annual review of budgets, decisions are required by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee to agree any non-statutory licensing fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year.

Background

2. The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences including those for taxi and private hire vehicles.
3. The basis for setting taxi and private hire fees is to ensure they cover the full costs of performing the functions. Legal challenges in the past, have confirmed that licensing fees may not be used to generate a profit for councils but the burden to support taxi fees should also not fall on residents in the district.
4. The proposed taxi and private hire fees follow a comprehensive review to include cost recovery for officer time, administration by licensing and other departments plus the cost of consumables (vehicle plates, brackets, driver badges, door signage etc). Process implications from the revised Taxi Licensing Policy, published in Spring 2025 were also considered.
5. The fee review also considers the Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and additional checks to promote public safety and best practice.

General Purposes and Licensing Committee 9 January 2026

6. At the General Purposes and Licensing Committee held on 9 January 2026, fees for the taxi and private hire licensing function were

proposed within the fees and charges report for the financial year 2026/27. **(Appendix 1).**

7. The General Purposes and Licensing Committee approved the fees for the taxi and private hire function as proposed, for public consultation, in accordance with section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Section 70 of the Act only requires consultation for increases to vehicle and operator licences, however, for transparency all fee proposals have been published.
8. The proposed fees have been subject to a 28-day consultation period which ended on 12 February 2026. A public notice with proposals was placed in a local newspaper, posted on the Council’s taxi licensing web page and displayed at the Council Offices at Appletree Court.

Taxi licensing fees

9. In order to support the trade in previous years, particularly during and after the covid pandemic, taxi licensing fees did not increase for 7 years. The last increase being in April 2024.
10. The table below shows the history of the licensing fees since 2017.

Licence	01/04/2017	% increase	01/04/2024	% increase	01/04/2025	proposed %increase	Proposed 1/4/2026
Vehicle Licence	£142.00	14	£162.00	0	£162.00	6	£172.00
Drivers Licence	£142.00	18	£167.00	0	£167.00	6	£177.00
Vehicle Inspection	£55.00	9	£60.00	0	£60.00	5	£63.00
Knowledge Test	£37.00	35	£50.00	0	£50.00	20	£60.00

11. The proposed fee for the annual vehicle licence is £172.00 with an increase of £10.00 to fully cover the costs of processing applications and producing licences, and to reflect the new policy requirement that all newly registered vehicles must meet Euro 6 emissions standards.
12. It is proposed that driver and private hire operator licence fees be increased by £10.00 to £177.00 and by £13.00 to £533.00 respectively. As these licences are issued on a three year and five year cycle, the impact of the increase would be spread over those periods.
13. The fee for the annual vehicle check has been reviewed to reflect the cost of employing trained mechanics and supplies and services at the Council depots in Hardley and Lymington. An increase of £3.00 per vehicle test is proposed taking the cost to £63.00.

14. The driver knowledge test fee has increased by £10.00, bringing the new cost to £60. This fee applies only to new applicants. Each application requires officers to take payment, process paperwork, arrange appointments, verify Right to Work documentation, print test materials, invigilate the test, mark completed papers, and issue results to applicants.
15. There has also been a minimal increase in the cost of replacement parts to vehicle plates.
16. A breakdown of costs to support the calculation of fees for these licences is provided as **Appendix 2**.

Objection to the Proposed Fees

17. During the consultation period, one response was received, objecting to the proposed fee increases by the council. This objection can be found at **Appendix 3**.
18. The objection was submitted by Paul Osborne, Chair of the New Forest Taxi Operator and Driver Association. He states that as there have been no increase in taxi tariffs (the amount Licensed Hackney Carriage Drivers can charge per mile) for the past four years the proposed fee increases are considered to be excessive.
19. The objection highlights concern about the rising costs associated with driver and vehicle licences, driver knowledge tests, and vehicle inspections. The trade objects to any further fee increases being introduced before a taxi tariff uplift is agreed and suggests that vehicle re-tests should be provided free of charge.
20. The last taxi tariff review was undertaken in 2022 and an agreed increase in tariffs were introduced subsequently in June 2022. It is important to distinguish that tariff setting is a separate process to the fee setting proposed in this report. Furthermore, these tariffs only apply to hackney carriages, which are currently approximately 100 vehicles out of the current licensed vehicle fleet of 609.
21. The table of fares (taxi tariffs) can only be reviewed following a request for review (as stated in the Taxi Licensing Policy, Section 2.14 Additional Provisions for Hackney Carriages only). In addition, the request must be supported by at least 70% of hackney carriage proprietors.
22. Based on the request from the Chair of the New Forest Taxi Operator and Driver Association for a review of the taxi tariff, officers will now consult with all hackney carriage proprietors in due course to determine whether they support a review of the taxi tariff. Subject to securing support from 70% of hackney carriage proprietors, the

review will take into account fuel prices, licensing fees, and benchmarking against other Licensing Authorities.

23. A further consultation would be undertaken before the proposals are considered and approved by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee at a later date, but certainly not before September 2026. Therefore, it should be noted that this review will not be completed or implemented before 1 April 2026, when the new fees are scheduled to take effect.
24. This tariff review does not affect the 500 private hire vehicles who can set their own passenger fees.
25. The objection letter also proposes that vehicle re-tests should be free of charge. However, this would have a financial impact on the provision of the Transport Team to undertake the volume of tests and re-tests required. The onus is on the drivers to present a vehicle in a roadworthy and fare-ready condition, and to reduce the potential for a test failure. The absence of a fee could remove the incentive for proprietors to present vehicles in the best condition, resulting in more re-tests which would have an impact on the resource provided, availability of appointments and waiting times.
26. In addition, cancellations and no-show fees are a deterrent and support service efficiency. The vehicle test is not an MOT; it requires the time and expertise of an NFDC-trained mechanic, and the associated costs must be recovered to ensure the service remains viable and vehicles are safe and presentable.

Corporate plan priorities

Theme:

27. Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. Future New Forest. Transforming tomorrow, together.

Corporate Plan Objective:

28. Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. Being financially responsible.

Service Objective:

29. Implementation of the Environmental and Regulation Service Plans.

Financial and resource implications

30. There will be no additional costs in adoption of these fees and charges, and the new charges are likely to better offset the costs of the licensing work, therefore increasing income and closing the income-cost gap.

Legal implications

31. The fees and charges review is undertaken in line with legislation and statutory guidance with the aim of ensuring full cost recovery.

Risk Assessment

32. A formal risk assessment is not required.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

33. There are no direct climate implications.

Equalities implications

34. Under the legislation, councils are permitted to set fees that reflect the actual costs of processing and issuing licences, ensuring that no profit is made. Any changes to fees and charges are communicated to licence holders, and a statutory consultation will be carried out in relation to taxi licensing fees and charges.

Crime and disorder implications

35. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

36. There are no direct implications.

Conclusions

37. The setting of discretionary fees for licensing must be formally approved by the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee before they may be applied.
38. Taxi licensing fees were not increased in 2025 whereas other licensing fees have been reviewed on an annual basis.
39. The setting of the proposed licensing fees and charges has been through a rigorous process, to cost the delivery of the service at a time when service costs are increasing.
40. Members must consider the objections received to the proposed fees, together with the requirement for the cost recovery of the service and determine the level at which to set the fees.
41. Fees agreed at this meeting will take effect from 1 April 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed fees for 2026/2027 for the Taxi and private hire function

Appendix 2- Breakdown of costs

Appendix 3- Objection letter

Background Papers:

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

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APPENDIX 1

LICENSING SERVICES PROPOSED SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2026/27

	Current charges	Proposed charges
All annual fees unless stated	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
<u>HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE FEES</u>		
Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Drivers dual licence		
New or Renewal (3 year dual licence)	£162.00	£172.00
Driver Awareness Test	£50.00	£60.00
Duplicate driver's badge	£12.50	£13.00
Private Hire Operator Licence		
New or Renewal (5 year licence) (or pro rata if applicable)	£520.00	£533.00
Vehicle Licence		
Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle - 1 year licence- (includes vehicle plate)	£167.00	£177.00
Vehicle test or re-test	£60.00	£63.00
Partial re-test (if applicable)	£25.00	£26.00
Vehicle - private plate registration (includes vehicle plate)	£63.00	£67.00
Vehicle plate - replacement (bracket and insert)	£24.00	£25.00
Vehicle plate - replacement of insert	£12.00	£12.50
Vehicle plate - replacement of bracket and fixings	£12.00	£12.50
Vehicle stepped plate	£30.00	£32.00
Executive vehicle exemption (includes vehicle plate)	£55.00	£58.00
No smoking signs (pair)	£1.00	£1.00
Private hire door signs (pair) and wipe	£10.00	£10.00
<u>OTHER LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES</u>		
Sex Shop Licence	Actual cost	Actual cost
Pleasure Boat (1 year licence)	£121.00	£126.00
Boatman Licences - new and renewal (3 year licence)	£120.00	£125.00
Pavement licence -New application 2 year licence	£350.00	£363.00
Pavement licence -Renewal application 2 year licence	£250.00	£260.00
<u>LICENSING ACT 2003</u>		
Statutory fees apply		
<u>GAMBLING ACT 2005</u>		
Permits and Small Society Lottery licences-Statutory fees apply		
Bingo Premises		
New Application	£2,575.00	£2,672.00
Annual Fee	£772.00	£800.00
Provisional Statement New	£3,500.00	£3,500.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	£649.00	£674.00
Variation Fee	£948.00	£984.00
Transfer Fee	£649.00	£674.00
Reinstatement of Licence	£1,200.00	£1,200.00

Betting premises

New Application	£1,802.00	£1,870.00
Annual Fee	£412.00	£428.00
Provisional Statement New	£1,622.00	£1,684.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	£649.00	£674.00
Variation Fee	£814.00	£845.00
Transfer Fee	£567.00	£588.00
Reinstatement of Licence	£649.00	£674.00

Adult Gaming Centre (AGC)

New Application	£927.00	£962.00
Annual Fee	£515.00	£535.00
Provisional Statement New	£865.00	£898.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	£520.00	£540.00
Variation Fee	£515.00	£534.00
Transfer Fee	£520.00	£540.00
Reinstatement of Licence	£520.00	£540.00

Family Entertainment Centre (FEC)

New Application	£1,030.00	£1,069.00
Annual Fee	£515.00	£534.00
Provisional Statement New	£865.00	£898.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	£412.00	£428.00
Variation Fee	£515.00	£535.00
Transfer Fee	£412.00	£428.00
Reinstatement of Licence	£412.00	£428.00

Track

New Application	£1,373.00	£1,425.00
Annual Fee	£541.00	£562.00
Provisional Statement New	£1,373.00	£1,425.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	£515.00	£535.00
Variation Fee	£682.00	£707.00
Transfer Fee	£515.00	£535.00
Reinstatement of Licence	£515.00	£535.00

APPENDIX 2

FOOD AND SAFETY TEAM PROPOSED SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2026/27

All annual fees unless stated	Current charges	Proposed charges
	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
<u>SKIN PIERCING</u>		
Premises Registration	£196.00	£203.00
Practitioner Registration	£146.00	£152.00
Premises and person	£270.00	£280.00
Addition Practitioner (during main application)	£78.00	£81.00
Additional Activities	£89.00	£92.00
Minor Variation - reissue of certificate	£25.00	£26.00
<u>CARAVANS</u>		
New site (single)	£607.00	£630.00
New site (multiple)	£851.00	£883.00
annual fee per caravan	£14.40	£14.80
Licence Transfer	£215.00	£223.00
Alter Conditions	£404.00	£419.00
Deposit Site Rules	£98.00	£102.00
Fit and proper person	£268.00	£278.00
<u>ANIMAL WELFARE</u>		
Dog Home Boarding	£283.00	£294.00
New Dog Home Boarding	£327.00	£339.00
Dog Day Care	£371.00	£385.00
New Dog Day Care	£444.00	£461.00
Dog/Cat Boarding	£371.00	£385.00
New Dog/Cat Boarding	£444.00	£461.00
Dog breeding	£400.00	£415.00
New Dog Breeding	£481.00	£499.00
Pet Shop	£371.00	£385.00
New Pet Shop	£444.00	£461.00
Animal Exhibition	£351.00	£364.00
New Animal Exhibition	£392.00	£407.00
Hiring Horses (0-9)	£554.00	£575.00
New Hiring Horses (0-9)	£613.00	£636.00
Hiring Horses (10-19)	£635.00	£659.00
New Hiring Horses (10-19)	£699.00	£726.00
Hiring Horses (20+)	£704.00	£730.00
New Hiring Horses (20+)	£768.00	£797.00
Licence Variation	£46.00	£48.00
Re-rating	£233.00	£242.00

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10th February 2026

Licensing manager NFDC Taxi Licensing department

We write in relation to the proposed taxi fee increase which has been put out for consultation.

This letter serves as our objection to further fee increases in 2026 after the increase in 2017 and 2024, to have another increase in fees in 2026 when the trade has received no increase in potential revenue through a revised tariff structure shows total disregard for Drivers and operators.

As you know the last tariff increase for the trade was in 2022 and previous to that in 2013 (9 years) with nothing and only after a great deal of pressure being put on licensing and we are now 4 years further forward with no further increase to our tariffs and as far as we know nothing in the pipe line yet with the proposed fee increases two rises in our fees since 2017 and the new proposed fee increase making 3 in 9 years against our increases as a trade over 13 years we feel is very bad taste and shows a complete lack of consideration for operators and drivers.

We all understand prices must increase but it needs to be fair and equal for all involved you cannot keep taking without giving back. Drivers and operators cannot be seen as an easy cash cow; there are not bottomless pits of money available to draw from.

If you look at table 1 it highlights the fee increase in 2024 and the proposed increase in 2026 The previous increase in 2017 figures are not shown but should be considered showing all increases to NFDC fees over 9 years the percentage increases are far too high between 2024 and proposed in 2026 and not justifiable compared to our percentage increase over 13 years detailed in table 2.

The trade and public need to be shown justification of the cost of delivery as stated by NFDC, this was questioned at the last consultation in 2024 by a local councilor but quickly dismissed by the chair of the meeting that is not good enough and should be provided before any further increases to fees are considered to just state it costs more does not cut the mustard.

The trade is already squeezed both operators with government costs for employees, energy costs, rising NLW and fuel costs to name a few and drivers with cost of living, Insurance and fuel costs rising out of control these are already being swallowed up and beating down already small profits without additional licensing costs on top.

We completely disagree with there being any further increase in fees before a tariff increase is implemented for drivers and operators.

We hope our concerns are considered and a fair fare increase for the trade implemented pre any fee increases for NFDC which we feel would be an acceptable route forward for everyone.

There were Increase in fees in 2017 and 2024 and proposed Increase for 2026 (9years)

Table 1 licensing fee increases between 2024 increase- and proposed 2026 increase.

Item	2024 Inc %	2026 inc %	Total inc over 3 years %
Vehicle Licence	14.08	5.9	19.98
Vehicle Insp Fee	9.09	5	14.09
Knowledge Test Fee	35.1	20	55.1
Drivers Licence	17.61	6.2	23.81

Table 2 Tariff / trade increase (in the last 13 years).

	£	£	%
flag	2.3	2.6	13%
143 yards	0.2	0.25	25%
1 mile £	3.87	4.19	8.20%

We would also ask that consideration be given to the fact that the current NFDC vehicle test fee of £60 is already higher than the department of transport vehicle test (MOT) £54.85, with the proposal to increase the NFDC vehicle test fee to £63.00.(Most operators pay in the region of £40-£45 for a trade MOT test currently).



What justification is there for increasing this fee further? It cannot cost the council more than a garage to carry out an hourly test. The retest fee should in our opinion also be waived in line with most MOT garages offering free retests.

Kind Regards.

New Forest Taxi association.

Paul – Marchwood Motorways Taxis ltd

Rob – Lymington Taxis

Paul & Elaine – Network cars

Alan – Hinton cars

Paul & Harry TCC cars



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