

Council – 26 February 2026

Licensing Fees and Charges 2026 – 2027

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report presents the proposed fees and charges for the Council’s licensing functions. They have been reviewed and set at a level calculated to cover the cost of delivering the service.</p> <p>The Council is asked to approve the fees and charges for 2026-27 as listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 following the recommendation by General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 9 January 2026.</p> <p>Taxi fees are not included as objections to the proposed increases were received during the statutory consultation.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. approves the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2026–27 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2, and2. That the power to set the scale of fees and charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences, including to consider the objections made in respect of the proposed fees, be delegated to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.
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, Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Strategic Director(s)	Peter Matthew - Strategic Director of Housing & Communities (Interim)
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Introduction

1. As part of the annual review of budgets, decisions are required by Council, to agree any non-statutory licensing fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year.
2. This report details the proposed fees and charges in **Appendix 1** for licences and registrations for 2026 - 2027 for the following work areas -Licensing Act, gambling, pleasure boats, boatmen and pavement licences and in **Appendix 2** for animal welfare licensing, caravan site licensing and skin piercing registrations.

Background

3. The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences, registrations and permits. Many of these allow the Council to set and charge a fee, to cover the costs of the administration and issue of these permissions.
4. The basis in setting these fees is to ensure they are reasonable and cover the costs of performing the functions which includes, administration, officer costs for undertaking inspections, testing and hearings. Costs associated with enforcement activity, for example relating to premises which are operating without a licence, or breach of licence conditions cannot be included in the licence fee.
5. Furthermore, legal cases such as Hemming v Westminster City Council have confirmed that licensing fees may not be used to generate a profit for councils and that fees should be reviewed regularly to ensure that neither a significant surplus, nor deficit is created.
6. Fees set under the Licensing Act 2003, are set centrally by Government and the council has no discretion to review or amend these. The current fee structure was set when the Act came into force in November 2005 and the fee regime has not been revised since this date.

7. The council is, however, able to set fees for the following licence types:
- taxis and private hire (drivers, vehicles and operators).
 - pavement licences.
 - gambling establishments.
 - pleasure boats (boatmen and vessels)
 - animal welfare (boarding, home boarding, dog breeding, riding establishments, pet shops and zoos).
 - residential caravan sites.
 - skin piercing (tattooing, acupuncture, electrolysis, cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring).

Licensing fees and charges

8. The setting of discretionary fees for the licensing of the above matters, must be formally approved by the council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee before they may be applied.
9. A comprehensive review of licensing fees and charges was undertaken in 2024 considering cost to deliver each function and benchmarking against similar and neighbouring local authorities. Fees and charges were increased to ensure full cost recovery for the services without generating a profit.
10. The proposed fees for licences and permits for 2026-27 in **Appendices 1 and 2** have been increased in line with the inflation index figure of September 2025, which was 3.8%.

Taxi licensing fees

11. A new Taxi Licensing Policy was adopted by the Council in 2025 and following implementation of this policy, any new process requirements have been built into the assessment for the future cost recovery of issuing these licences.
12. The proposed amendments to the taxi and private hire fees follow this comprehensive review and include cost recovery for officer time, issue permissions and cost of consumables (vehicle plates, brackets, driver badges, new door signage etc).

Implementation of any fee changes for taxi licensing

13. Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires that any proposed increase to taxi licensing fees must be subject to a 28-day consultation period, following advertisement.
14. If there were no objections to the proposed taxi and private hire fees following consultation, Council would have been asked to consider approval of the fees and charges, as recommended by the General

Purposes and Licensing Committee, for implementation on 1 April 2026.

15. However, objections were received during the consultation period. The proposal is for these responses to be considered and fees agreed by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 6 March 2026, subject to Council delegating the power to set the scale of fees and charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences to this Committee.

Gambling fees

16. All permits and lottery fees set under the Gambling Act 2005 are statutorily set, whereas gambling premises licence fees are capped, with the discretion for fee setting up to this level. These gambling premises licences have been increased in line with inflation.

Corporate plan priorities

17. Theme:

Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

Future New Forest. Transforming tomorrow, together.

18. Corporate Plan Objective:

Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Being financially responsible.

19. Service Objective:

Implementation of the Environmental and Regulation Service Plans.

Consultation undertaken

20. This report has been reviewed by EMT, the Portfolio Holder and considered by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

Financial and resource implications

21. There will be no additional costs in adoption of these fees and changes, 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

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

Risk Assessment

23. A formal risk assessment is not required.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

24. There are no direct climate implications.

Equalities implications

25. 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

26. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

27. There are no direct implications.

Conclusions

28. The setting of the proposed licensing fees and charges has been through a rigorous process, to cost the delivery of the service to businesses and members of the public.

29. The increased fees are proposed to take effect from 1 April 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed fees for 2026/2027 for Licensing Services
Not including Taxi fees

Appendix 2- Proposed fees for 2026/2027 for Environmental Health Licensing

Background Papers:

[Mobile Homes Act 2013: a guide for local authorities on setting licence fees](#)

[Mobile homes: a guide for local authorities on setting fees for the fit and proper person test](#)

[Animal activity licensing process: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

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