

## LICENSING COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2010

### HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES 2010/2011

Report of the: Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For Decision

**Executive Summary:** This report considers the appropriate licence fees and associated costs of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing for the 2010/11 financial year to ensure that the 'Taxi Licensing' service remains self-financing, in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.

**This report supports the Key Aim of** safe communities and effective management of Council Resources.

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Mrs Bracken

**Head of Service** Head of Environmental and Operational Services – Mr Richard Wilson

**Recommendation:** It is RESOLVED that from 1 April 2010 the list of fees and associated costs for licences in respect of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators be varied as follows:

	Existing Fees	New Fees
<b>Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence</b>		
On initial application	£154 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)	£154 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£36	£36
On renewal	£110 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)	£110 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£36	£36
<b>Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence</b>	£262 for one year	£267 for one year
<b>Private Hire Operator's Licence</b>		
On initial application	£273 for three years	£279

On renewal	£87 for three years	£89
<b>Private Hire Driver's Licence</b>		
On initial application	£154 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)	£154 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12))
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£36	£36
On renewal	£110 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)	£110 for three years (01.04.09 – 31.03.12)
Criminal Records Bureau Search Fee	£36	£36
<b>Private Hire Vehicle Licence</b>	£262 for one year	£267 for one year
<b>Additional Costs</b>		
Change of Hackney Carriage to Private Hire	£62	£63
Change from Private Hire to Hackney Carriage	£81	£83
Replace Vehicle Plate	£35	£36
Replace Identification Badge	£25	£25.50
Vehicle Re-test	£50	£50
Vehicle Partial Re-Test	Half the current MOT fee	Half the current MOT fee
Change of Ownership of Licensed Vehicle	£61	£62
Attempting "Knowledge Test" after two failures	£45 for each attempt	£46
Vehicle Tests –		Owner turning up without their insurance documents will be charged half the fee and the test will not go ahead.
Copies of existing licences	£7.50 each	£7.50 each

Replacement Vehicles

If a licensed vehicle is replaced during the valid licence period then the cost of licensing the replacement vehicle will be £267. However if the vehicle is replaced within six months of the issue of the licence then the fee will be reduced by £100 in the first of those six months; £90 in the second; £80 in the third; £70 in the fourth; £60 in the fifth and £50 in the sixth month.

If a licensed vehicle is replaced temporarily for up to 2 months because of damage to it then the fee will be £99 to test and licence the replacement vehicle and a further £99 to test and re-licence the original vehicle.

Medical Fee for new and renewal driver licences for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire payable directly to The Cedars Surgery	£50	£55
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**Background**

- 1 This taxi licensing service is required to be self-financing and the proposed increases to fees will ensure this is maintained.
- 2 The licence fees and associated costs of 'taxi' licensing are also increased in line with the 2% inflation rate in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.
- 3 Careful monitoring of income and expenditure has been carried out over the current financial year and the income from licence fees and associated costs, together with expenditure has been in accordance with the objectives laid out in the budget plan.
- 4 Members are reminded that the fees for the hackney carriage and private hire driver licences are normally fixed for three years and that they were last reviewed by this Committee in January 2009 for the period 1 April 2009 until 31 March 2012.
- 5 In the past year The Driving Standards Agency have increased the fee for it's 'taxi driver test', that new applicants are required to take in accordance with the Council's 'Taxi Licensing Policy', to £78 from 1 January 2010 to reflect the increase in VAT from 15% to 17.5% payable to the DSA by the applicant.

The Cedars Surgery at Swanley has again been selected to be the approved Centre for medical examinations with respect to Driver Licence applications in accordance with the Taxi Licensing Policy for the three years commencing 1 January 2009 and from that date the fee payable by the applicant has risen from £50 to £55. The fee for the Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Search, at the present, remains the same as last year at £36.

- 6 The three costs mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs, which a new applicant has to pay, means, that in addition to the licence fee set by Members, a new applicant for a driver licence will have to pay, if the recommended licence fee increase is approved, a total of £323 from 1 April

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2010 whilst an applicant for a renewal of a licence will pay a total of £201 from the same date.

- 7 The Licensing team are writing to all Hackney Carriage Proprietors, Private Hire Operators, and all Drivers on w/c 25 January 2010 to give all parties the opportunity to make comment.

**Key Implications**

Financial

- 8 The cost of licence fees takes into account the need to maintain a 'self financing' position for the service. The proposals contained in this report will achieve this.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

- 9 Should parts of industry believe the authority's fees are at a level which is greater than the costs of the statutory functions then it would be open to them to undertake judicial review proceedings. Should this arise, the authority would need to evidence how it arrived at the fee levels to demonstrate that they have been calculated on a cost recovery basis only.

Equality

- 10 Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles available to all groups within the community.

**Risk Assessment Statement**

- 11 If the proposed licence fee increases are not agreed, as proposed, then financial support to the Taxi Licensing Service will have to be borne from within the Council's budgets.

**Sources of Information:**

Licensing Committee minutes 22.1.2009

Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976.

Taxi Licensing Policy

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**COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES DIRECTOR  
KRISTEN PATERSON**