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**INCREASE TO TAXI LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Bill Dixon  
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed increase in the fees relating to the licensing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, their drivers and operators.

**Summary**

2. This report provides information on the current fee levels, the proposed fees from 1 April 2010 and the trade response to the statutory consultation exercise.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that:
  - (a) Members approve the proposed fees and charges relating to hackney carriage licences, private hire vehicle licences and private hire operator licences detailed in **Appendix B** of the report.
  - (b) The revised charges are introduced for licences due on or after 1 April 2010.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendations are put forward to ensure that the costs of delivering the taxi licensing service can be met.

**Paul Wildsmith  
Director of Corporate Services**

**Background Papers**

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

## Appendices

- A Extracts from 1976 Act pertaining to setting of fees
- B Proposed fees for 2010/2011
- C Budget and Projected Outturn 2009/10
- D Anticipated income from proposed fees
- E Estimated Income and Expenditure 2010/2011
- F Proposed allocation of Officer time 2010/2011
- G Weekly cost of taxi licences
- H Fees comparison with other Tees Valley Authorities
- I Letters of objection from Mr Singh and other Trade Members

Pam Ross : Extension 2647

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Sustainability	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The proposals affect the taxi trade who reside in all wards
Groups Affected	The proposals affect the Taxi Trade
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	The proposals do not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this report represents an urgent matter to enable the budget to be implemented for the start of the financial year.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Efficiency	The proposals are designed to ensure that the service can continue to operate within budget

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

5. The purpose of licensing hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, their drivers and operators is to ensure the travelling public of Darlington are provided with a safe and reliable service and are protected from all illegal activities associated with the provision of a taxi service. The cost of administering and controlling this service may be recouped by the levy of fees as specified in the legislation governing this area of licensing. The legislation permits the Council to recover all or part of the costs of providing the taxi licensing service, including its administration and control (ie enforcement) or supervision. It does not permit the Council to profit from its fees and charges, thus ring fencing the income to the Taxi Licensing service. The Council may, however, choose to subsidise the service. **Appendix A** to this report replicates the relevant sections of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 relating to the levy of fees and charges.

### Information and Analysis

6. To enable the Taxi Licensing Budget for 2010/2011 to be established, a review of the fees and charges levied for this service was undertaken by Officers in November 2009 in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member. An advisory letter was sent to the taxi trade on Thursday 19 November 2009 informing them about the proposed increases and the fact that the statutory advertisement would appear in the Northern Echo during the week ending 28 November 2009. The proposed increases were then advertised in the Northern Echo on 25 November 2009 as required by Section 70 (3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Any objections were required to be submitted to the Council no later than Wednesday 23 December 2009. As a result one objection was received on 21 December 2009 from a Mr Singh who at the time was both a driver and vehicle proprietor, however, his vehicle licence expired on 31 December 2009 and he is currently only a driver. Members will note from this report that the driver fees are not being increased and therefore will not be affected by the increase in proprietor or operator fees (driver fees are not being increased). A further 74 objections were received on 23 December 2009, however, 21 of these were solely from drivers for whom it is proposed that the fees are not increased (see paragraph 7 below) and who therefore would not be affected by the increase in proprietor or operator fees. The remaining 53 are from proprietors of vehicles who have each signed a standard worded letter which is very similar to Mr Singh's letter. The objectors' comments have been dealt with in paragraphs 13 to 18 of this report. The proposed increases to fees are attached at **Appendix B**.
7. As the taxi trade have regularly expressed concern at the rising cost of entry to the trade for drivers the 2010/2011 budget has reflected this by leaving the fees for single and dual driver licences at their 2006/2007 level for the fourth year. The proposed increases in fees for vehicles and operators) are still competitive compared with the other Tees Valley authorities.
8. As part of the review of the fees and charges an exercise has been undertaken to establish the actual service costs based on the proportion of staff time spent on the taxi licensing function and the direct and indirect costs associated with delivering this service. At **Appendix C** is the 2009/2010 projected outturn. Members will note that, based on the number of licences in existence at 31 October 2009, there is a potential estimated deficit of

£4,594. To ensure that this cost does not have to be an additional burden on the Council taxpayer a trading account has been established in respect of the taxi-licensing budget. This will allow the service to carry forward any end of year deficit or surplus into succeeding financial years and thus eventually recoup any deficits.

9. At **Appendix D** is the anticipated income from the proposed fees and at **Appendix E** the anticipated income and expenditure for 2010/2011. Members will note that, even with the proposed increases to the fees and charges, there is still a deficit for 2010/11 but it is anticipated that this may be reduced considerably through additional revenue usually generated by changes of vehicles etc throughout the licensing year and potential budgetary savings in the coming year.
10. The proportion of Officer time allocated to the taxi licensing function is attached as **Appendix F**. Members will note a small increase in time allocation for the enforcement officers. This is to reflect changes in legislation which have resulted in a higher level of unlicensed activity in the private hire trade and a subsequent increase in prosecution work.
11. **Appendix G** is the actual weekly cost for a vehicle, driver and operator licence.
12. A cost comparison of the licensing fees of the other Tees Valley Authorities is attached as **Appendix H**. At the time of preparing this report, each of the other Local Authorities except Stockton on Tees (who are awaiting their budgetary position before making a decision) indicated they would be undertaking a review of their fees and charges from January 2010 onwards with a view to increasing fees in 2010. The comparison table therefore does not reflect the actual 2010/11 charges in respect of our Tees Valley colleagues.
13. In addition to the licence fees it is proposed that the legislation test for drivers is increased from £25 to £30. This only applies when a driver fails a test and has to re-sit it. It is further proposed that any test where the applicant does not attend or that is cancelled by an applicant less than 48 hours of the test date should be charged for in full.
14. It is also proposed that a fee of £15 is levied where a licence has been paid for by cheque which is subsequently refused by the bank and returned marked “refer to drawer”.

### **Trade Responses**

15. As a result of the consultation exercise one individual letter and a further 74 identical letters were received from trade members who wished to object to the proposed fees. Both letters have been reproduced in full as **Appendix I(i) and Appendix I(ii)**. Of the 75 letters, 22 are from licensed drivers rather than proprietors or operators. As this report proposes that the fees for drivers are not to increase Members are invited to consider what weight should be given to these 21 objections given that the proposals do not directly affect any of these objectors. By way of summary the remaining 53 trade members cite the cost of working as a taxi driver and proprietor including licensing fees, insurance costs and the cost of servicing and maintaining their vehicles. The Trade further states that the Council’s licensing department is not protecting the safety of the Trade, criticises the taxi rank provision; criticises the fact that the ranks are not ‘policed’ and are used by members of the public, criticises the lack of taxi marshalls and suggests that fees should be reduced. The

issue of location and policing/marshalling of ranks is not within the remit of a fees report, however for completeness officers have also responded to these comments below.

## Officers Response

16. One cost that is cited by the trade is the cost of a driver medical which the trade claim is required every three years. The 1976 legislation requires that a Council shall **not** grant a licence unless satisfied that the driver is a “fit and proper” person and indicates that evidence of medical fitness may be required by a Council. Darlington Council requires a medical at first application, then again at 45 years and then every five years until the driver reaches 65 years when an annual medical is required.
17. In terms of the service provided by the Licensing Section, the legislation (as detailed at **Appendix A**) permits licence fees to be spent on any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the provision of ranks, inspection of vehicles and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. As well as the daily administrative work associated with licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators, both at point of licence and throughout the year (eg chasing up evidence of insurance, etc), Officers regularly work out of hours to ensure compliance with the legislation. Officers undertake concentrated enforcement work throughout the year, with prosecution of illegal activities including unlicensed vehicles, operators and drivers and uninsured drivers and also licensed trade who have not complied with the requirements of the legislation.
18. It would be difficult to interpret the legislative provision for use of the fees to include the use of taxi marshalls who are associated with the dispersal of patrons rather than directly associated with the provision of a taxi rank and to do so would leave the Council open to challenge by the trade. Members are aware that the Council’s responsibility is to provide a safe means of travel for the travelling public. Initiatives to protect the trade are, however, encouraged such as the installation of CCTV and protective shields in vehicles. Ultimately, however, although the Council provides a licence for the trade the actual business of private hire or hackney carriage work is the responsibility of the trade member.
19. The policing of taxi ranks in respect of unauthorised use does not currently rest with the Council. This will however change when Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is introduced and Council officers will have responsibility for monitoring such use. Currently licensing officers try to discourage unauthorised use but do not have the ability to undertake vehicle search details in respect of such use and cannot therefore establish the details of the offender.
20. In response to the comments made by the trade about the location of ranks the Officers responsible for location and determination of ranks are required to undertake full consultation with the trade and other bodies including the Police in respect of any proposals and also to advertise proposals in a local newspaper. As a result of trade comments in the past 12 months alone the proposals have been modified significantly.
21. The Trade also refers to a former member of licensing staff who defrauded the Council of in excess of £13,000. Members may be aware that this entire sum was repaid and that the person involved in the fraud has been dealt with by Teesside Crown Court.

## THE LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR SETTING FEES

Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states that:

- (1) Subject of the provisions of Sub Section (2) of this section, a District Council may charge such fees for the grant of vehicle and operators' licences as may be resolved by them from time to time and as may be sufficient in the aggregate to cover in whole or in part:
  - (a) the reasonable cost of the carrying out by or on behalf of the District Council of inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles for the purpose of determining whether any such licence should be granted or renewed;
  - (b) the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands;
  - (c) any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the foregoing and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.
- (2) The fees chargeable under this section shall not exceed:
  - (a) for the grant of a vehicle licence in respect of a hackney carriage, twenty five pounds;
  - (b) for the grant of a vehicle licence in respect of a private hire vehicle, twenty five pounds; and
  - (c) for the grant of an operator's licence, twenty five pounds per annum;or, in any such case, such other sums as a District Council may, subject to the following provisions of this section, from time to time determine.
- (3)
  - (a) If a District Council determine that the maximum fees specified in Sub Section (2) of this section should be varied they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice setting out the variation proposed, drawing attention to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection and specifying the period, which shall not be less than twenty eight days from the date of the first publication of the notice, within which and the manner in which objections to the variation can be made.
  - (b) A copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall for the period of twenty eight days from the date of the first publication thereof be deposited at the offices of the Council which published the notice and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.
- (4) If no objection to a variation is duly made within the period specified in the notice referred to in subsection (3) of this section, or if all objections so made are withdrawn, the variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the

period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection or, if more than one, of the last objection, whichever date is the later.

- (5) If objection is duly made as aforesaid and is not withdrawn, the District Council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the variation shall come into force with or without modification as decided by the district Council after consideration of the objections.
- (6) A District Council may remit the whole or part of any fee chargeable in pursuance of this section for the grant of a licence under section 48 or 55 of this Act in any case in which they think it appropriate to do so.

**PROPOSED INCREASES TO TAXI LICENCE FEES AND OTHER CHARGES  
1 APRIL 2010**

<b>LICENCE</b>	<b>CURRENT</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Driver (single)	£70	No change
Driver (combined)	£110	No change
HC Vehicle	£400 (excluding fees for plate(s))	£410 (excluding fees for plate(s))
PH Vehicle	£365 + £35 operator levy (excluding fees for plate(s))	£375 + £35 operator levy (excluding fees for plate(s))
PH Operator	£275	£300
<b>ADDITIONAL CHARGES</b>	<b>CURRENT</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Knowledge test	£25 (re-sits only)	£30
Plate (rear)	£15	No change
Plate (front)	£10	No change
Door discs (each)	£5	No change
Tariff card	£2	No change
Duplicate Driver Badge	£10	No change
Admin Charge	£35 per hour or part	No change
Refer to drawer fee	N/A	£15



## BUDGET AND PROJECTED OUTTURN 2009-10

<b>Employee Costs</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Projected Outturn £</b>
<b>Description</b>		
Salaries	84060	78694
Salaries - Superannuation	12594	13015
Salaries - NI	6087	5607
Insurances - Employers Liability	826	826
Training Expenses	2300	2080
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>105867</b>	<b>100222</b>
<b>Premises Costs</b>		
Operational Buildings Recharge	4647	4647
Fire Insurance	18	18
<b>Total premises</b>	<b>4665</b>	<b>4665</b>
<b>Transport Costs</b>		
Lump sum allowances	1786	1686
Mileage & Transport allowances	723	723
<b>Total transport</b>	<b>2509</b>	<b>2409</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>		
Equipment	2150	2150
Protective clothing	150	80
Books & publications	300	300
Print & Design recharge	712	712
Printing & stationery		
Professional fees & Consultancy	500	500
Computer equipment	500	500
Computer software - maintenance	1300	1300
Postage	1000	1000
Telephone Recharge	100	100
Subscriptions	100	100
Advertising	1500	1000
Miscellaneous Insurances	97	97
Capital Charges	430	430
Prudential Borrowing		
Additional supplies & services	1800	1800***
<b>Total suppliers and services</b>	<b>10639</b>	<b>10069</b>
<b>*** This sum represents the cost of 4 joint police exercises for which no budget was allocated</b>		

## Central Support

	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Projected Outturn £</b>
<b>Description</b>		
Accounting Services	4297	4297
Financial Services	223	223
Legal Services	4222	4222
Telephones	446	446
Engineers	26	26
Payroll Services	159	159
HR, Policy Development and IR	965	965
A Director of /Corporate Services	5898	5898
Occupational Health	117	117
<b>Total central support</b>	<b>16353</b>	<b>16353</b>
<b>Total Charges</b>	<b>140033</b>	<b>133718</b>
Carry over deficit from 2008-09		4066
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>140033</b>	<b>137784</b>
Driver licence	-27430	-28790
Hackney Carriage - vehicle licence	-76400	-76000
Private hire - operators licence	-1500	-1375
Private hire - vehicle licence	-17600	-22000
-5025            -5025		
<b>Total income</b>	<b>-127955</b>	<b>-133190</b>
	<b>12078</b>	<b>4594</b>

**ANTICIPATED INCOME 2010-2011 BASED ON PROPOSED FEES  
(Figures based on 31 October 2009 licence numbers)**

Drivers (single)	339	@ £ 70	£ 23,730
Drivers (combined)	46	@ £110	£ 5,060
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	187	@ £410	£ 76,670
Private Hire Vehicles	55	@ £375	£ 20,625
Private Hire Operating levy	55	@ £ 35	£ 1,925
Annual Rear Plate	242	@ £ 15	£ 3,630
PH Operators	5	@ £300	£ 1,500
Incidental Income			£ 1,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>£134,640</b>

Members should note that the licence numbers fluctuate on a monthly basis dependent on licence renewals. The above numbers are based on the position at 31 October 2009 and may change. Such fluctuations mean that a proposed budget can always only be set on the basis of the number of licences issued at the time of preparing the proposed increases.

## ESTIMATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2010-11

Estimate of the Trading Account for **Year End 31 March 2011**

Subjective	Description	Annual Budget 2010/2011
1000	Salaries	81260
1060	Salaries - Superannuation	12098
1050	Salaries - NI	4506
1710	Insurances - Employers Liability	634
1707	Training Expenses	1810
	<b>Total employees</b>	<b>100308</b>
<b>Premises Costs</b>		
	Operational Buildings Recharge	4758
	Insurance	115
	<b>Total premises</b>	<b>4873</b>
<b>Transport Costs</b>		
	Lump sum allowances	1948
	Mileage allowances	723
	<b>Total transport</b>	<b>2671</b>
<b>Supplies and Services Costs</b>		
	Equipment	3000
	Protective clothing	100
	Books and publications	300
	Print and Design recharge	900
	Stationery	
	Professional fees & Consultancy	300
	Computer equipment	500
	Computer software - maintenance	1300
	Postage	1000
	Telephone Costs	100
	Conferences/Seminars	270
	Subscriptions	100
	Advertising	1500
	Miscellaneous	2000
	Capital Charges	580
	Equipment - Prudential Borrowing	
	Additional supplies & services	1800
	<b>Total suppliers and services</b>	<b>13750</b>

**APPENDIX E (cont)**

<b>Central Support Costs</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
Accounting Services	4400
Financial Services	228
Legal Services	4322
Telephones	457
Engineers	26
Payroll Services	163
HR, Policy Development & IR	988
A Director of Corporate Services	6039
Occupational Health	119
<b>Total central support</b>	<b>16742</b>
<b>Total Charges</b>	<b>138344</b>
<b>Estimated Trading Account deficit carry over 2010-2011</b>	<b>4594</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>142938</b>
Drivers licence	-28790
Hackney Carriage - vehicle licence	-76670
Private hire - operators licence	-1500
Private hire - vehicle licence	-22550
Miscellaneous Income (Non VAT)	-5130
<b>Total income</b>	<b>-134640</b>
<b>DEFICIT 2010/11</b>	<b>8298</b>

**NB It is anticipated that the deficit shown above will be met by the additional revenue raised during the year from transfers of vehicles, applications for replacement vehicles and other incidental licensing income**

**OFFICER TIME ALLOCATION**

The proposed proportion of Officer time allocated to Taxi Licensing is as follows:

<b>POST</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
Licensing Manager	30%	30%
Principal Licensing Officer	35%	35%
Licensing Enforcement Officer (x2) 75%	75% *****	
Licensing Officer	25%	20%
Licensing Assistant	15%	post to be deleted
Licensing Admin Asst (x2)	50%	50%

The percentages have been arrived at based, where possible on a period of actual time recordings in 2009.

\*\*\*\*\* the actual time recordings showed that 80% of time was spent on “taxi” work however the figure has been left at 75% to reflect the planned increase in general licensing enforcement in 2010 -11.

\*

**PROPOSED FEES WEEKLY COST**

(NB this reflects only the actual licence cost to the trade, not the cost of running their businesses).

<b>Initial HC/PH Driver Licence</b>	(single)	£70.00
	(combined)	£110.00
CRB		£36.00
DSA		£69.00
Medical (average cost)		£80.00
Total Cost of New Driver	(single) First Year	<b>£255.00</b>
	(combined) First Year	<b>£295.00</b>
Cost per week (First Year) single licence		<b>£4.90</b>
Combined HC/PH Driver (First Year)		<b>£5.67</b>
Renewal licence (single)		£70.00
<b>Cost per week</b>		<b>£1.35</b>
Renewal licence (combined)		£110.00
<b>Cost per week</b>		<b>£2.12</b>
<b>Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence</b>		£410.00
Rear Plate		£15.00
Front Plate (One off fee)		£10.00
**VOSA Test (Two @ £55)		£110.00
Door Discs		£10.00
Tariff card		£2.00
Total Cost (First Year)		<b>£557</b>
<b>Cost per week</b>		<b>£10.71</b>
Renewal cost		£535
<b>Cost per week</b>		<b>£10.29</b>
<b>Private Hire Vehicle</b>		£375.00
Operator Levy		£35.00
Rear Plate		£15.00
Front Plate (One off fee)		£10.00
**VOSA Test (Two @ £55)		£110
Total Cost (First year)		<b>£545</b>
<b>Cost per week</b>		<b>£10.48</b>
Renewal cost		£535
Cost per week		<b>£10.29</b>
<b>Operator Licence</b>		£300
Cost per week		<b>£5.77</b>

**By way of comparison the proposed fee cost for a street trader in town centre per week is £131.73**

**APPENDIX H**

**TEES VALLEY FEES COMPARISON TABLE**

	From 1 April 2010 Darlington	**Current Hartlepool	**Current Middlesbrough	**Current Redcar & Cleveland	**Current Stockton
Driver Licence (single)	£70	£65	£52	£55	HC £141 (inc £36CRB) + £70 and £70 renewal PH £121 (inc £36 CRB)+ £70 and £70 renewal
Driver Licence (dual)	£110	£90	£77	£78	£141 (inc £36 CRB) + £85 and £85 renewal
HC vehicle licence	£410 excluding tests	£327including 2 tests	£474 including 2 tests	£324 including 2 vehicle tests	£425 including plates and stickers, excluding tests Renewal £395
PH vehicle licence	£375 excluding vehicle tests and £35 operating levy)	£327 including 2 tests	£491 including 2 tests and £33 operating levy	£288 including 2 vehicle tests	£425 including plates and stickers, excluding tests Renewal £395
Operator licence	£300	£300 + £10 per vehicle up to maximum of £500	£414	£225 + £26 per vehicle operating levy	No. Grant Ren 1 veh £175 £120 2 vehs £250 £240 3 - 7 £645 £590 8 - 12 £920 £875 13 -17 £1195 £1150 18 22 £1470 £1425 23 -27 £1745 £1700 28 32 £2020 £1975 33 37 £2295 £2250 38-42- £2570 £2525 43-47 £2845 £2800 each additional 5 vehicles or part = fee of £275
Knowledge Test	£30 (re-sits only)	£20	£25 (re-sits only)	£20 (re-sits only)	£60 HC £40 PH re-sits only PH to Dual £105 HC to Dual £45
Meter Test	N/A	N/A	N/A	£8	N/A
Plate (rear)	£15	£27	£10	£10	£10 first replacement £45 further replacement (including decals etc)
Plate (front)	£10	£15	£12	£12	£10 duplicate
Door Discs (each)	£5	N/A	£6 – HC £5 -PH	£7	£7.50
Tariff Card	£2	N/A	£1	£2.50	£1.50
Duplicate Driver Badge	£10	No Charge	£25	£5	£10
Admin Charge	£35 per hour or part, .	N/A	£30 per hour or part (inc drivers) £50 vehicle/operator	£30 per hour or part	£45 per hour or part
Vehicle transfer	£35	£25	£25	£30	£100
Change of Operator	£35	N/A	£33	£30	N/A
Complaints stickers	N/A	N/A	£2.50	N/A	£4
Vehicle Test	£52 direct to VOSA (possibly £55 from January 2009)	£20 (re-tests only)	£47 (re-sit)	£30	£50 £55 inc MOT

**NB Stockton Council charge a lower fee for wheelchair accessible vehicles (£210 initial fee & £190 renewal). The Tees Valley Authorities will be considering their fees in the coming months**



**APPENDIX H (cont)**

**TEES VALLEY LICENCE NUMBERS COMPARISON AT 31 OCTOBER 2009**

	<b>Darlington</b>	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>Middlesbrough</b>	<b>Redcar and Cleveland</b>	<b>Stockton</b>
Number Single Drivers	339	573	641	267	401
Number Dual Drivers	46	54	382	179	323
Number HC Vehicles	187	162	367	117	288
Number PH Vehicles	55	180	384	229	242
Number Operators	5	6	13	23	33
Total Licences	632	975	1787	815	1287

“Dear Sir/Madam

I read this document relating to your annual exercise to once again increase licensing fees and I object to this on these grounds:

How does your accounting system work with regards to raising revenue when your department were not aware that an employee in your department namely Abigail Clement managed to steal £13,670 of licensing money?

This is the worst recession for 30 years and takings are down by 40% yet you still insist on attempting to take more, the Council must start to take responsibility and help small businesses in Darlington to thrive and prosper, for everyone’s benefit.

We are a public service and work every day and night of the year, buses are not available to the public on Christmas day or Boxing day and after 12 pm only taxis, yet the Council fails miserably to recognise this tremendous value and asset. This type of service has to be encouraged not hindered or the public may see it retract.

Costs for running a taxi in Darlington are now eye watering, example below for a hackney carriage driver annual:

£415 Hackney Carriage licences  
£55 six months compliance test  
£55 six months compliance test  
£70 hackney carriage license  
£30 CRB check  
£80 medical /3 or 5 years  
£+ additional i.e. plates, door discs, tariff cards.

Obvious additional necessities are:

Average insurance - £2000  
Public Liability - £100  
Road Tax - £120-£185  
Servicing & Tyres - £1500

A lot of taxi trade members keep asking this question:

What do the licensing department actually do for us? To justify fee increases we must see progressive value from them. We do not. This may soften any increase. We do not get any protection with regards to our safety.

Taxi ranks in Darlington are unsafe. Taxi ranks in Darlington are not marshalled. Taxi ranks in Darlington have no queuing system for the public. Taxi ranks in Darlington are not thought out properly with regards to location and damage to taxis caused by litter bins, flower tubs and signposts adjacent to the rear side passenger doors of taxis causing damage to the doors, my vehicle being an unfortunate casualty of this.

The taxi trade needs encouragement and recognition of its integral part of a varied transport system in Darlington. So rather than continually raise the licensing fees and exercise annually should be undertaken to substantially reduce these fees based on efficiency and value for money as is now happening in all government departments.

JM Singh,”  
HCD 090

“Dear Sir/Madam

I read this document relating to your annual exercise to once again increase licensing fees and I hereby formally object to this on these grounds:

How does your accounting system work with regards to raising revenue when your department were not even ware that an employee of yours namely Abigail Clement managed to steal £13670 of licensing money?

We are currently in a recession and takings are down, yet you still insist on attempting to charge more for us to ply our trade. The Council should take more responsibility and realise it is in everyone’s best interest to help the small businesses of Darlington thrive and prosper.

We are a public service that runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. No other public transport is available in this way, yet the Council fails miserably to recognize this tremendous value and asset. This type of service has to be encouraged not hindered before most or all of our trade is lost because of your spiralling costs from which we see little or no return.

Costs for running a taxi in Darlington are staggering, for example

Hackney Carriage license £415

Six months compliance test £55

Six months compliance test £55

Hackney carriage license £70

CRB check £30

Medical for over 45’s £50-£110 depending on your surgery. Every 3 years minimum

Plates, tariff cards and decals £10 approximately

Then we have the vehicle costs on top of that including insurance, tyres and servicing to keep us on the road which costs an average of £4,000 per year.

A lot of taxi trade members keep asking the same question:

What do the licensing department actually do for us as a trade?

To justify fee increases we must see progressive value from them. We don’t.

Taxi ranks in our own center are unsafe.

Taxi ranks in our town center are not marshalled for public/our safety.

Taxi ranks in our town center are not thought out properly with regards to location and / or obstructions.

Taxi ranks in our town center are not policed. How often has a member of the public parked on a rank and left it there to go shopping or go for a quick drink etc.

Our trade needs encouragement and recognition of its integral part of a varied transport system in Darlington. So rather than continually raise the licensing fees an annual exercise should be undertaken to substantially reduce these fees based on efficiency and value for money as is now happening in all government departments.”

(see next page for list of objectors)

**NAMES OF PROPRIETORS WHO HAVE SIGNED LETTERS OF OBJECTION**

P Alan	HCV 031	M Bradbury	HCV 279
MM Brown	HCV 240	S Burns	HCV 071
M Chamberlain	HCV 236	K Clark	HCV 145
V Coxon	HCV 281	GJ Dove	HCV 036
M Dyson	HCV 221	J Eyles	HCV051
Mr Ferguson	HCV 105	DT Finnigan	HCV 050
P Forster	HCV 217	LM Farlow	HCV016
M Gallagher	HCV 174	R Giroux	HCV 066
I Glasper	HCV 218	A Griffiths	HCV 115
N Griffiths	HCV 209	D Guest	HCV 010
M Hamilton	HCV 256	D Harrison	HCV 061
D Harrod	HCV 040	S Henderson	HCV 286
P Hilton	HCV 202	I Inston	HCV103
J Irvine	HCV 098	K Jackson	HCV 287
S Jones	HCV 214	M Kennedy	HCV 199
A Knight	HCV 074	A Loy	HCV 251
E McArthur	HCV 009	G McGuffie	HCV 299
B McMillan	HCV 076	A Marriner	HCV 151
C Marriner	HCV 007	P Metcalfe	HCV 152
P Mudd	HCV 003	J Notman	HCV 042
M O'Neill	HCV 205	R Oyston	HCV 124
MJ Ratcliff	HCV 268	PM Scott	HCV 100
R Stein	HCV 080	J Stoddart	HCV 224 & HCV 265
A Swan	HCV 058	N Thompson	HCV 055
A Turner	HCV 264	A Ward	HCV 255
A Wall	HCV 017	S West	HCV 005
MS Wilson	HCV 034		

**NAMES OF DRIVERS WHO HAVE SIGNED LETTERS OF OBJECTION**

R Atkins	HCD 195	CF Atkinson	HCD 047
E Boyer	HCD 022	D Boynes	PHD 159
A Bradley	HCD 346	S Dulson	HCD&PHD 190
M Fullerlove	HCD 095	A Gray	HCD 226
B Hodgson	HCD&PHD 182	C Hyde	HCD&PHD 102
G Jackson	HCD 325	G Kilburn	HCD 344
L Hamilton	HCD 374	T Patrick	HCD 061
L Pigg	HCD 002	A Sparrow	HCD 070
C Todd	HCD 394	S Trotman	HCD 276
CT Ward	HCD&PHD 106	M Ward	HCD 292
M Wilson	HCD 370		