

---

**REVIEW OF INCREASE IN FEES RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE  
AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Stephen Harker,  
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

---

**Purpose of Report**

1. To review the increase in the fees relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing following the receipt of a number of objections from members of the taxi trade.

**Information and Analysis**

2. In accordance with the Council's budget setting process, the revised fees for private hire and hackney carriage vehicles, drivers and operators were approved by Cabinet and endorsed by full Council on 3 February 2005. These revised fees were advertised in the Northern Echo on 21 March 2005 as required by section 70 (3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The fees were last increased in 2004.
3. Two identical letters were subsequently received are attached as **Appendix 1**. Each had numerous attachments detailing the names of trade members who wished to object to the rise in fees. The letters did not, however, provide addresses of the objectors and nor was any reason for the objection given. The trade representative who had provided the letters was advised of this by Officers and requested to obtain full details of the objectors and the actual objections to enable a report to be prepared.
4. On Monday 11 April 2005 at a meeting of the Taxi Liaison Group the same trade representative submitted a series of pro-forma objection letters, which once again did not provide addresses of the objectors or any reason for the objections to the proposed increase in the fees. Officers once again provided advice. On 18 April 2005 further correspondence including a copy of a letter sent to Alan Milburn MP and 45 letters, without address or reason for objection were received by the Licensing Section. A copy of the letter sent to Mr Milburn and an example and summary of the 45 letters are attached as **Appendix 2**.

**The Legislation**

5. The relevant legislation is attached as **Appendix 3**.

6. The existing and proposed fees, which were advertised, are as follows:

	<b>Existing Charge</b>	<b>Proposed Charge</b>
	£	£
Drivers Licence Application Fee (treated as part payment of the licence if the applicant is successful in obtaining a licence, otherwise it is non-refundable)	33.00	35.00
Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence	63.00	66.00
Private Hire Driver's Licence	63.00	66.00
Combined Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence (New Charge)	95.00	100.00
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence (separate charge for door discs)	320.00 +door discs	335.00 + door discs
Private Hire Vehicle Licence (separate charge for meter test if fitted.)	305.00	320.00
Private Hire Vehicle Operators Licence	140.00 + £26 per vehicle (non refundable)	145.00 +£27 vehicle (non refundable)
Knowledge Test Fee	16.50	17.50
Regulations Test Fee	16.50	17.50
Checking of Taxi Meters other than for Licensing/ Enforcement purposes	16.50	17.50

7. The number of licences issued to drivers and operators by the Council between 31 May 2004 and 1 June 2005 are as follows:

Hackney Carriage Driver	270
Private Hire Driver	133
Dual Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Driver	95
Operator	5

### **Outcome of Consultation**

8. The Council received two letters to which were attached a list of names of taxi drivers who wished to object to the increase. A further 45 letters, objecting to the increase were received. The letters are detailed in **Appendices 1 and 2**.

### **Legal Implications**

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

## **Council Policy Framework**

11. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

## **Decision Deadline**

12. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 dictates that objection is duly made and is not withdrawn, the Council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date (19 April 2005), on which the variation shall come into force with or without modification as decided by the District Council after consideration of the objections.

## **Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that Members recommend that the fees be increased as outlined in the report to Cabinet on 3 February 2005.

## **Reasons**

14. In considering this application, Members should take into account the following reasons:
- (a) Private hire and hackney carriage licensing is self-financing and must cover the cost of the provision of the service.
  - (b) The cost of the increase will have an impact on the private hire and hackney carriage trade.
  - (c) If the fees were not increased to cover the cost of the service any shortfall would have to be paid for from central funds.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

## **Background Papers**

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act  
Letters from Taxi Trade  
Copy of Advertisement  
Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan Report

## **Appendix**

- 1 – Copy of letter sent by Trade
- 2 – A copy of the letter sent to Mr Milburn and an example and summary of the 45 letters
- 3 – The Relevant Legislation

Ann Marku : Extension 388559