

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
08 FEBRUARY 2010**

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**FEES AND CHARGES  
(Chief Officer : Environment and Public Protection)**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1. Fees and charges are agreed annually by the Council. The Committee gave guidance in October 2008 to officers on how they wished to see the structure of fees and charges developed over the next few years. Officers have taken into account that guidance in drawing up proposed fees and charges for the Licensing Section and these were included within the Council fees and charges for 2010/11 which were agreed by the Executive for public consultation. See Annex 1.
- 1.2. The fees charged for the Licensing of Hackney Carriages, Private Hire vehicles and operators are required by legislation to be advertised in a local paper with any comments received and considered by the Committee.
- 1.3. An objection to the rise in Hackney Carriage fees was received from the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum on 14 January and is attached to the report as Annex 2. The Committee is therefore required to consider the objection and set the fee.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Committee:**

- (i) **considers the objection raised by the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum in relation to the increase of £7 per annum for the Hackney Carriage fee and**
- (ii) **sets the fee as proposed by the Executive.**

**3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The Borough Solicitor is satisfied that the relevant legal provisions are contained within the body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 3.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.3 There are no equalities impacts identified within this report..

Strategic Risk Management Issues

3.4 There are no strategic risk management issues identified within this report

#### **4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1. A number of fees such as those for licences under the Licensing Act 2003 are statutory fees set by legislation and the Council cannot increase those. The Council is presently charging the statutory maximum fees. For the Gambling Act 2005 statutory maximum fees are set within legislation and the Committee agreed 1 April 2007 to set the fees at 75% of that maximum, taking into account guidance from DCMS. It is not suggested that there should be any increase in these fees at this time.
- 4.2. The Committee requested in October 2008 that officers should take into account fees charged by other authorities for similar licences when making recommendations for fees. In particular officers should look to ensure that fees within Bracknell Forest reflect recovery of the costs incurred by the Council within the licensing process and should not be an unnecessary burden upon local businesses.
- 4.3. Where fees are found to reflect the costs incurred and other local authority fee structures, the proposal is to raise the fee by around 2.5% in line with Council guidance. Where fees may be viewed as significantly above other local authority fees the proposal is to either reduce the fee, recommend no increase or a smaller increase than 2.5%. Where the Council fee is seen to be significantly below other local authority fees these fees have been increased by a sum in excess of 2.5%, but it has not been the intention to raise the fee to a comparable one in a single step and therefore place a burden upon local businesses. In arriving at these proposals officers have been mindful that the purpose of charging is to contribute to the costs of the service and not to make a profit. Projected Income levels for 2010/11 based upon the proposed fees will result in licence holders still making a contribution and not meeting the full costs of the Licensing Service.
- 4.4. It has been identified that within some areas we do not have in place a fee structure. This would apply to the Home Boarding of Dogs, Zoos and Hairdressers. Within the last year we have received a number of enquiries for the Home Boarding of Dogs. From the work required to process, inspect and approve premises it is deemed that £120 as an initial fee and £100 for renewal would be sufficient to recover costs incurred by the Council. Similarly Hairdressers are required to register with the Council. A £35 fee is deemed appropriate for receipt and processing of these registrations. There is no Zoo present within the Borough and no fee set for an application. A fee of £400 is proposed to cover the expected costs should an application be received.
- 4.5. The fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles are set with a view to recovering costs in the administration, monitoring and maintaining taxi ranks and ensuring that licensed vehicles are safe and suitable for purpose. The fee also includes an additional sum of £50 to recover, over a 3 year period, the Council costs incurred in conducting the Unmet Demand Survey by TPI in 2009 at the request of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum. The fee proposed is comparable with other local authority charges and is therefore equitable for those wishing to operate a Hackney Carriage business within Bracknell Forest. The increase of £7 equates to 2.6%.
- 4.6. The BLTF (see Annex 2) have stated in their objection that they have not requested nor received an increase in the fare rate since July 2008.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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