

**TO: LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
12 JANUARY 2012**

**HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE FEE
Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report brings to the attention of the Committee an objection received in relation to the proposed increase in the hackney carriage licence fee. At the meeting on the 13 October 2011 the Committee agreed to a proposed fee of £250 for a hackney carriage licence, for it to be advertised and for any objections received to be brought back to this meeting for consideration.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the objection and confirms the proposed fee of £250 for an annual hackney carriage vehicle licence effective from 1 April 2012.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The recommendation recognises the requirements placed upon the Council in respect to the setting of hackney carriage vehicle licence fees. As an objection has been received, in accordance with the legal requirements the objection must be considered and the Committee must decide upon the fee to be set from 1 April 2012.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There is no alternative option that would meet the legal requirements within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Fees proposed to be charged for the licensing of hackney carriages; private hire vehicles and private hire operators are required by Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to be advertised in a local paper with a period of 28 days from the date of publication to allow for objections to the proposals to be made. Objections must be made in writing and received at Time Square.
- 5.2 On Thursday 24 November 2011 a notice was published in the Bracknell News. A copy of that notice is attached to this report as Annex A. The notice required that any objections be received by the 23 December 2011. Attached as Annex B is a letter received from John Yexley on the 19 December 2011 objecting to the increase in the hackney carriage vehicle fee and the driver (badge) licence fee.
- 5.3 The legal provision mentioned in paragraph 5.1 does not apply to the proposed fees for driver licences and therefore there is no requirement for the Committee to consider this part of the objection. The driver licence fees were discussed by

members at their meeting on the 13 October at which Mr Yexley spoke about his concerns on the proposed increase. The Committee after discussion agreed to recommend the fees to the Executive for public consultation, a process which is continuing.

- 5.4 The present licence fee for a hackney carriage is £220 and for a private hire vehicle £234. The Council provides taxi ranks within the borough for the exclusive use of hackney carriages and the costs of those ranks should be met out of the fees collected for hackney carriage vehicle licences. Until April 2010 the licence fee for a hackney carriage and private hire vehicle had been at a similar level, however in both 2010 and 2011 the Committee received objections to proposals to increase the hackney carriage fee from Mr Yexley on behalf of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum and the Committee agreed to hold the fee at the April 2009 level. During the period April 2009 until March 2012 a hackney carriage licence holder is required to pay a supplement of £50 per year on any licence granted. This was a sum agreed by the Committee in 2009 to recover the costs of an Unmet Demand Survey which had been commissioned and paid for by the Council at the request of the hackney carriage trade. Any licence issued or renewed from 1st April 2012 will not pay a £50 supplement.
- 5.5 The increase proposed for the hackney carriage fee is to bring it in line with the private hire vehicle licence fee which has been increased by inflation and guidance issued by the Council and this equates to a 13.6% rise within a 3 year period. The hackney carriage fares tariff, which is the charge made to passengers using a hackney carriage, was increased in July 2008 by an average of 9.6% on journeys between 1 and 5 miles. In addition, after holding their charges the same for 2009 and 2010 the hackney carriage trade requested and were granted an average 10.8% increase in May 2011.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The legal implications are identified within the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The income budget in hackney carriage licensing has been increased by the Council's guideline percentage when calculating the annual inflation provision. .

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Members of the public, businesses and representatives of the taxi trade.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Notice within the Bracknell News in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Written objection from Mr J Yexley received on 19 December 2011.

Background Papers

Licensing and Safety Committee 13 October 2011 – Fees and Charges report

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