

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

30 JUNE 2010

OBJECTIONS TO VARIATION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCE FEES

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to ask the Licensing and Safety Committee to consider objections received by the Council to the proposed variation to the table of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence Fees.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Under the council constitution the Licensing & Safety Committee has delegated powers on taxi, gambling, alcohol, entertainment, food and miscellaneous licensing. Functions relating to licensing and registration as set out in Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations, the Licensing Act 2003. Gambling Act 2005 and other licensing functions reserved by law to the Council's Licensing and Safety Committee and its Sub-Committees.
- 1.2 If members agree to amend the variation of fees, approval for this would need to be ratified by Full Council on 29 July 2010.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 25 February 2010 in setting its overall fees and charges for 2010/11, the Council agreed the following increases in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence fees:

| | <u>Existing</u> | <u>Proposed</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Vehicles under 3 years old | £ 78 | £ 80 |
| Vehicles between 3–7 years old | £123 | £130 |
| Vehicles over 7 years old | £134 | £140 |

For members information, each year, vehicles under 3 years old have one annual inspection, vehicles between 3-7 years have one annual and one interim inspection and vehicles over 7 years old have one

annual and two interim inspections. Regardless of age all vehicles have to comply with the vehicle standards set by this authority (including emissions testing).

2.2 Pursuant to the requirements of Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the proposed increases were duly advertised in the local press. As a result the attached two objections at Appendix (A) have been received.

2.3 The reasons for the objections being that over the last year the real cost of living has risen to more than 9.5% and that a further unsubstantiated increase in licence fees would be an unacceptable burden on the trade.

2.4 It is therefore now necessary for the Committee to consider these objections.

3. Risk Management

3.1 If members agree to amend the variation of fees and Full Council subsequently approved this, the risk would be loss of income against the income target set and the provision of a service that was no longer cost-recovery.

4. Financial and legal implications

4.1 The vehicle licence fee takes account of the vehicle inspection charges, salaries, enforcement and administration charges and reasonably reflects the costs of providing the service.

4.2 Should the proposed fees be reduced, the budget for 2010/11 would need to be revised to reflect the lower income.

4.3 Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits the council to charge for the grant of vehicle and vehicle operator licences. Such charges must not exceed the cost of providing the licensing service, including the cost of vehicle inspection, providing hackney carriage stands, the supervision and control of private hire and hackney carriage vehicles and reasonable administration costs.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The committee is asked to consider the objections received to the proposed variation to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence fees and decide whether or not to amend the variation of fees.

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Background papers

1. Letter/E-mail of objection
2. Council Agenda Papers – 25 February 2010
3. Minute 629(a) Council – 25 February 2010
4. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976