

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

<b>Meeting:</b>	Licensing Board
<b>Date:</b>	16 February 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Licensing Service – Proposed fee increase
<b>Directorate:</b>	Neighbourhood and Adult Services

### 5. Summary

This report outlines the proposed licensing fee increases to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

### 6. Recommendations

- (i) That Members approve the proposed fee structure for non-statutory licensing fees at the rate of increase indicated.
- (ii) That Members direct officers to undertake the necessary consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade associations and place a notice in the local press outlining the proposed fee increases in relation to Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Private Hire Operators.
- (iii) That a further report be presented for consideration and determination at the next meeting of the Licensing Board on 16 March 2011 following the consultation period.

### 7. Proposals and Details

The proposed increase in licensing fees reflects the direct costs involved in maintaining the current level of administrative and enforcement services. The increase is necessary to ensure the cost of delivering services is met within budget. The increase represents a 1% (rounded up to the nearest pound) increase in fees commencing in the financial year 2011/12.

The fees for administering the Licensing Act 2003 are not included as they are set by central government and are standard throughout the country. The fees outlined in Appendix A are those that it is proposed to increase by 1% (rounded up to the nearest pound).

#### Vehicles

In relation to Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Vehicles the testing is carried out by Translinc who have yet to indicate what their increased charges will be. They will be inline with the Motoring RPI Index and these increases will be passed directly onto the trade.

The fees proposed include a change to the administrative process for vehicles over the age of 5.

Currently licences and plates are issued for 1 year with an intermediate inspection at 6 months. The administrative process for chasing outstanding intermediates is quite cumbersome and time consuming for staff within Licensing involving suspending of licences for those who fail to book intermediates before the due date, requiring the plate to be returned and held until such time as the vehicle passes the inspection and in some cases chasing licence holders both by telephone and letter trying to get them to comply with their licence conditions.

Under the proposed fees for vehicles over 5 years old a licence and plate will be issued for 6 months and the fees will be split in half. This will immediately reduce the administrative burden on the Licensing Team and much simpler system to administer.

### **Drivers**

Where an enhanced CRB Disclosure is required an administrative charge will be levied in addition to the fee charged by the CRB to cover the cost of checking the documentation and sending the form to the CRB. The process of checking the disclosure application form is quite time consuming for the Licensing Team as well as quite complex. This small charge will help cover the cost of copying documents, signing the form and sending the forms away to the Criminal Records Bureau and dealing with the subsequent correspondence including obtaining additional information. The fee has been included in the application fee for the driver licence.

### **General**

We are currently working on procedures within the office including administrative procedures which will require a full costing out of how much it costs to process particular applications. Indications are that particularly in relation to driver applications the true cost of processing appears to be much higher than the increases proposed.

Due to the current economic climate these types of fee increase are not being proposed, however members may be requested to review such fees in future.

## **8. Finance**

Local Authorities can only set fee levels (where they are non-statutory and not prescribed) which are reasonable and proportionate to the costs incurred in providing a licensing service, in terms of administration processes and enforcement responsibilities.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to recover an appropriate level of revenue from licensing fees would result in the cost of service provision being greater than the income received. This would mean the service could not be delivered in budget which could lead to a reduction in the levels of services provided, especially in terms of enforcement.

A fee review in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 is being conducted, but as yet, there are no recommendations or indeed amendments made to fee structures. Therefore these fees remain unchanged at this stage.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Failure to recover funding sufficient to meet the costs of the service could result in the section failing to deliver its statutory functions. The setting of fees, as part of the budget setting process, forms part of the Councils Service and Financial Planning framework which supports the delivery of cost effective and efficient services.

The setting of fees as part of the budget setting process is consistent with the Corporate Plan's cross cutting themes of sustainable development and fairness as it ensures the deliver of a cost effective licensing service. It also ensures that the Council continues to maintain its statutory functions and undertakes enforcement to support the delivery of safe and sustainable communities in Rotherham.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Comparison table of fees from other Licensing Authorities

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## APPENDIX A

### Rotherham Borough Council – Proposals for Licensing Fees 2011/12

#### **Fees proposed to increase by 1% (rounded up to nearest £)**

(i)	<b><u>Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Licensing</u></b>		
		<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed</u></b>
		<b><u>Fees</u></b>	<b><u>Fees</u></b>
	<b>Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers</b>		
	1 to 3 years	£138	£145
	Up to 1 year	£ 73.00	£79.00
	Knowledge Test	£14.00	£15.00
	DVLA Record Check	£8.00	£9.00
	Replacement Badge	£16.00	£17.00
	Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure	£36.00	£36.00
	 <b><u>Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles</u></b>		
	Application Fee (vehicles under the age of 5 licensed for 1 full year)	£104.00	£105.00
	Application Fee (vehicles over the age of 5 licensed for 6 months)		£52.50
	 <b><u>Inspection Fees – Current Fees charged by Translinc</u></b>		
	New Applications/Renewals/Replacement Vehicles Including issuing of MOT Certificate where applicable		£74.00
	Intermediate Inspection		£62.00
	Missed Appointment (unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated)		£50.00
	Full Retest (where use of smoke meter/brake tester/ headlight beam tester is required)		£74.00
	Partial Retest (all items except those which are identified as free within VOSA Guidelines)		£35.00
	Vehicle Plates (vehicles under the age of 5 licensed for 1 full year)	£29.00	£30.00
	Vehicle Plates (vehicles over the age of 5 licensed for 6 months)		£15.00
	Transfer of Vehicle Licence	£38.00	£39.00

(from one owner to another)

Approval of trailer for attachment to vehicle	£33.00	£34.00
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Approval of advertisement	£35 per advert	£36 per advert
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Hackney Carriage Door Sign	£4.00	£5.00
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### **Private Hire Operators**

1 to 3 vehicles	£131	£133
4 to 20 vehicles	£177	£179
21 to 40 vehicles	£419	£424
Over 40 vehicles	£617	£624

### **Miscellaneous**

Copy of Licence	£16.00	£17.00
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Request for Information from File		£10 as per DP Act 1998 per request
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### **Other Licences/Registrations**

(ii)	Approved Premises (Marriages/Civil Partnerships) ( <u>3 years</u> )	<u>Present Fees</u>	<u>Proposed Fees</u>
		£1432	£1447
	Transfer	£27.00	£28.00
	Variation	£266	£269

(iii)	<u>Small Bus Permits</u>	£ 21.00	£22.00
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	<u>Sex Shops</u>	£7635	£7635
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(iv)	<u>Motor Salvage Operators</u>		
	3 year Registration Grant/ Renewal	£93.00	£94.00

	Certified Copy of Register (each copy up to a max of 5)	£13.00	£14.00
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	Copy of Database	£7.00	£8.00
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	Public Access to Register	Free	Free
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### **Other Miscellaneous**

	Photocopying	£0.20 per sheet	£0.21 per sheet
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