

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

Meeting:	Licensing Board
Date:	13 th April, 2011
Title:	Licensing Service – Proposed fee increase
Directorate:	Neighbourhood and Adult Services

5. Summary

This report outlines the proposed licensing fee increases to be effective from 1st April 2011 in relation Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators.

6. Recommendations

- (i) That Members approve the proposed fee structure for the vehicle and operator licensing fees.

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.

In relation to the charges for testing vehicles by Translinc they use the Motoring RPI Index to set their charges. This is currently running at 4.7%. However this year they have only increased their charges by 2% acknowledging current budgetary constraints. The only fee not subject to any change is the Missed Appointment Charge. The fees have been rounded up to the nearest pound to make the administration of the system much easier.

In relation to vehicle and operator fees it is a statutory requirement that the fees are advertised in the local press, inviting objections within 28 days of the date the notice being placed. The notice appeared in the Rotherham Advertiser on Friday 25 February 2011 and the date for objections to be received was Friday 25 March 2011.

In addition letters were sent to all Hackney Carriage proprietors, Private Hire Operators and Private Hire Vehicle proprietors advising them of the proposed increase to fees and inviting comments.

We have received one representation/comment about the proposed increase, details of which are attached in Appendix B.

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.

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 deliver of safe and sustainable communities in Rotherham.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation with all those who will be affected by the proposed changes, i.e all vehicle proprietors and private hire operators have been sent a letter outlining the proposals.

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APPENDIX A

Rotherham Borough Council – Proposals for Licensing Fees 2011/12

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles

Application Fee
(vehicles under the age of 5 licensed for 1 full year) £105.00

Application Fee
(vehicles over the age of 5 licensed for 6 months) £52.50

Inspection Fees – Current Fees charged by Translinc

New Applications/Renewals/Replacement Vehicles £76.00
Including issuing of MOT Certificate where applicable

Intermediate Inspection £64.00

Missed Appointment £50.00
(unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated)

Full Retest £76.00
(where use of smoke meter/brake tester/headlight beam tester is required)

Partial Retest £36.00
(all items except those which are identified as free within VOSA Guidelines)

Vehicle Plates £30.00
(vehicles under the age of 5 licensed for 1 full year)

Vehicle Plates £15.00
(vehicles over the age of 5 licensed for 6 months)

Transfer of Vehicle Licence £39.00
(from one owner to another)

Approval of trailer for attachment to vehicle £34.00

Approval of advertisement £36 per advert

Hackney Carriage Door Sign £5.00

Private Hire Operators

1 to 3 vehicles £133

4 to 20 vehicles £179

21 to 40 vehicles £424

Over 40 vehicles £624

APPENDIX B

Table of Responses received to consultation on Proposed Increase to Vehicle and Operator Fees

NAME OF RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
Mr L Port	<p data-bbox="815 376 1474 517">'I am wishing to object to the proposed rise in fees for the granting of private hire operators, hackney carriage and private hire vehicles on the following grounds –</p> <p data-bbox="815 555 1474 663">1 Rotherham Council has announced no increase in council tax fees. I do consider these proposed rises to stealth tax.</p> <p data-bbox="815 701 1474 842">2 The private hire operators fees are unfair e.g. 1 to 3 vehicles - £133 = £44.33 per vehicle over 30 vehicles - £624 = £21.40 per vehicle</p> <p data-bbox="815 880 1474 987">A firm like A1 taxis has over a hundred vehicles, therefore the unit price would be £6.24 per vehicle.</p> <p data-bbox="815 1025 1474 1167">3 In my experience the licensing department is simply a money collecting department that issues pieces of paper and provided no services or support in return.</p> <p data-bbox="815 1205 1474 1346">4 I also want to point out that Rotherham Council has failed to comply with government instructions to deregulate the issue of Hackney Carriage Licence.</p>