

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director of Enterprise,
Tourism & the Environment
to

Licensing Committee

on

14th May 2009

Report prepared by:
Mrs Dipti Patel, Head of Public Protection and
Carl Robinson, Group Manager, Regulatory Services

Hackney Carriage Licensing Charges
Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee –
Executive Councillor: Councillor Ian Robertson
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees for 2009/10 and representations made in response to the publication of the proposed fees.
- 1.2 To enable Licensing Committee Members to hear invited trade representations in respect of the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees for 2009/10.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That Members note the report and the views presented by Trade representatives for referral to Cabinet when the final decision on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees for 2009/10 are considered.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence fees are proposed on an annual basis as part of the Council's overall fees and charges process. A general increase of around 4% has been applied to these fees in the past, and no objections have been raised to any previous proposals.
- 3.2 During this past year the Council has carried out a corporate benchmarking exercise in respect of its various fees and charges, and amongst other areas, the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire licence fees were highlighted. The review took account of neighbouring licensing authority charges for such licences, and a benchmarking exercise revealed some inconsistencies with close neighbours.

- 3.3 Following this review, the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing fees for 2009/10 were proposed. In line with the review, the proposals included a higher increase than usual.
- 3.4 The proposed fees will result in annual HC or PH Vehicle Licenses increasing by approx 19 – 20%. This is approx £50 increase per year (under £5 per month).
- 3.5 HC and PH Driver Licenses are paid on a 3 yearly basis. The fees are increased each year as part of the annual consideration of fees and charges, however for the majority of drivers, the latest fee charged in 2005/6 was £198. The proposed increase to £292.50 for 2009/10 represents approx £31.50 per year from 05/06 to 09/10. This proposed increase is approx 47% over a 3 year period. The proposed increase when compared against actual fees for 2008/09 represents a 38% increase, from £214 to £292.50.
- 3.6 The following table summarises the proposed increases for 2009/10 against fees charged during 2008/09:

Based on Proposed 09/10 Fees

Licence Type	Proposed Increase (Based on 2008/09 Fees)	Annual % Increase (Based on 2008/09 Fees)
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HC Vehicle Annual Licence	£50 per licence (260 – 310)	19%
PH Vehicles Annual Licence	£46 per licence (229 – 275)	20%
HC / PH Driver 3 Year Licence	£81.50 per licence (214 – 292.50)	38%
Large Operator 5 Year Licence	£172 per licence (928 – 1100)	18.5%
Small Operator 1 Year Licence	£15 per licence (85 – 100)	18%

- 3.7 Under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Licensing Authority is required to publish any proposed increases in Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Licence fees for a statutory 28 day consultation / notice period. A public Notice was published on Monday 16th March 2009 with the 28 day period ending on Sunday 12th April 2009, inviting any representations.
- 3.8 During the statutory period the Council has received a number of representations (approaching 200 individual responses) in respect of both the vehicle licence fees and the driver licence fees, all of which have been logged

and responded to informing the sender that the representation will be considered as part of the consultation process.

- 3.9 The Executive Council Member for Public Protection, Councillor Ian Robertson has considered these representations and it has been agreed to convene the Licensing Committee to hear specific representations from invited members of the local Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade, with feedback to Cabinet to follow the meeting before a final decision is made on fees for 2009/10.
- 3.10 Objections raised have included reference to the current economic climate / proposed rates being well above current inflation / reduced demand for taxis at this time / rising costs of insurance and other business expenses / unsupportive of local traders.

4. Corporate Implications

4.1 Legal Implications

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 contains statutory provisions in respect of advertising / inviting representations on proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees and in respect of time scales for agreeing fees.

5. Background papers

- 5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 There are no appendices to this report.