

To: General Purposes Sub Committee
Date: 12th October 2009 **Item No:**
Report of: Head of Environmental Development
Title of Report: Amendment to Private Hire and Hackney Carriage
Vehicle Licence Fees

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To respond to a request from the Licensing trade to amend the licensing fees regarding a vehicle transfer fee.

Report Approved by:

Finance: Anna Hedges
Legal: Jeremy Franklin

Policy Framework: It is a statutory function of district councils to issue licenses to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and drivers. The licence fees are set by this committee to cover all the office functions within the Licensing Office.

Recommendation(s): (i) to endorse the amendments to current licensing arrangements enabling a licence to be transferred from one vehicle to another; and,
(ii) to approve the amendments to the licence fees required as a result of the above amendment.

There are only financial implications to the Taxi Licensing budget as the office functions are self-financed.

Background

1. Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 53(2) and Section 70 a district council can set the fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence fees. The cost of a licence has to only cover the cost of the licensing function. Each licence is issued for one year.
2. Currently a vehicle licence is not transferable to another vehicle or refundable during the licence period.
3. During a meeting between officers and representatives from the licensing trade, it was requested that a vehicle licence should be transferable to another vehicle for the duration of the licence. An example was given that a proprietor had renewed his vehicle licence and four weeks later the vehicle had been in a non-fault accident and been written off. When he replaced the vehicle, he had to pay another full licence fee despite the fact that the existing licence was only four weeks old.
4. In the first quarter of this financial year there were five Hackney Carriage and eight Private Hire Vehicle licenses issued where the licence holders had changed their vehicle and were unable to transfer their existing licences.
5. It is recommended that (i) a proprietor can transfer a vehicle licence, on existing terms, to another vehicle; and, (ii) that the arrangements are amended so that licence holders can apply to transfer a vehicle licence from one vehicle to another and that the transfer will take effect without any changes to the term of the licence or any of the conditions.
6. If the committee agrees the change to the licence fee there will be very little impact to the Taxi Licensing income but it will help those drivers who through no fault of their own have to change their vehicle during the period of a licence.

7. There will be some administration costs in transferring a licence and it is recommended that they be recovered at cost. The table below shows what the current cost would be to transfer a licence in this financial year and therefore the fee to be charged when transferring a licence.

	Hackney Carriage	Private Hire Vehicle
Administration - 1 hour	12	12
Identification Plate	20	20
Identification Stickers	10	35
Total Cost	£42	£67

8. In paragraph 4 the report states that there were a total of 13 vehicle licences that were transferred. If the new recommendation had been in place at the start of the financial year the loss of revenue to the licensing budget would have been £3,105.

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Background papers: None