

# **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **Licensing Committee**

### **Report of the Head of Highways**

**17th February 2006**

#### **Review of Fees and Charges 2006/2007** **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing**

##### **1. Summary Statement**

- 1.1 Licensing of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage trades is a requirement of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. This Act also gives a Local Authority power to levy charges to meet this requirement resulting in a self-financing service.
- 1.2 The aim of the Licensing Service is to protect the public and the costs of achieving this aim must be borne by licence holders.
- 1.3 This report details the proposed fees and charges for 2006/7. In line with the service's commitment to consultation, the Licensing Service will be consulting with the trade on these proposed fees via the Service's Licensing Newsletter.
- 1.4 This report also includes feedback from the trade, via complaints during 2005/6, which the Committee is asked to consider as part of the fee setting process.

- 2.1 That approval be given to the fees and charges proposed in respect of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing for 2006/2007, outlined at Appendix A.

- 2.2 That the proposed fees be advertised in the Express and Star as required by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.3 That any objections received be reported to the Members for consideration, prior to the implementation date.
- 2.4 That if no objections are received, the fees be implemented with effect from 1/4/2006.

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**3. Strategic Resource Implications**

- 3.1 In setting the Highways budget proposals for 2006/2007, the attached fees and charges have been taken into account.

**4. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 Financial Regulation 4.30 requires fees and charges to be reviewed at least annually.

**5. Implications for the Council's Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The objectives of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing service are consistent with and compliment Sandwell's Crime and Disorder Strategy and Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Licensing process contributes to the promotion of economic success by making opportunities available for employment locally.
- 5.3 Through the provision of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licensing service, the Licensing Section is committed to contributing to the Corporate Priorities of creating safer, cleaner, stronger communities and helping to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

**6. Background Details**

- 6.1 Licensing fees are reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect the changing costs and development within the service.
- 6.2 During 2005/6, the Licensing Service has been extremely successful in meeting its objectives and the service has continued to develop.

- 6.3 The proposed fee structure, at Appendix A, has been carefully reviewed to ensure that individual applicants are charged for the service they receive on a fair 'cost recovery' basis i.e. individuals pay for their actual use of the service, not a proportion of the overall costs. As a result, we have broken the fee structure down into each component part. Applicants will pay for what they use. This appears to be a more transparent and equitable way to cover the costs of providing the service.
- 6.4 The current fee schedule is attached at Appendix B for comparison.
- 6.5 During 2005/6, the Licensing Section has logged any complaints received in connection with fees. Details of these complaints are attached at Appendix C. The Committee is asked to consider this feedback as part of the fee setting process.

### **Source Documents**

Complaint Records 2005/6

## Appendix A

### Review of fees w.e.f. 01.04.06

#### ***Drivers***

Medical / Medical retest	Paid direct
DSA	Paid direct
New Application (incl. CRB + DVLA check)	£141
Renewal Application + CRB (every 3rd yr)	£136
Renewal Application	£100
Badge deposit	£30
Badge replacement	£4.50

#### ***Vehicles***

Brand new vehicle (annual incl. ISC x 1)	£302.50
New Application (annual incl. full test + ISC x 1) < 5 yrs	£337.50
Renewal Application (annual incl. full test + ISC x 1) < 5 yrs	£309.00
Renewal Application (annual incl. full test x 1 + ISC x 2) > 5 yrs	£344
Renewal Application (4 months) > 5 yrs	£139
2 <sup>nd</sup> 4 months	£139
3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 months	£139

New Application (6 months incl. full test) < 5 yrs	£193
2 <sup>nd</sup> 6 months (incl. ISC)	£193
Plate extension Application	£19
Transfer a vehicle application (another owner)	£19
Replacement vehicle application (to same expiry date) (includes full test and set of plates)	£80
Administration fee for missed garage appointment (without 24 hours notice)	£20
Full test retest fee (free or)	£39
ISC retest fee (free or)	£23
Plate deposit	£30
Replacement of large plate (incl. pins)	£10.00
Replacement of small plate	£6.50
Replacement bracket	£13
Replacement of roof sign plate	£9.50
Replacement roof sign (complete)	£89 incl.p&p
Replacement roof sign (hood only)	£49 incl.p&p
Replacement bulbs and parts	Paid direct
Late insurance production	£50

## ***Operators***

Application (one year)	£443
Application (three years)	£1190

VAT is not chargeable in relation to any of the above services  
Fees are non refundable.

## Appendix B

### Private Hire and Hackney Carriage

### LICENSING FEES FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2005

Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Driver	<u>Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Vehicle</u>	<u>Private Hire Operator</u>
£133	<p><i>Over 5 years old</i></p> <p><b><u>Annual fee £443</u></b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>4 month fee £173</b></p> <p><i>Under 5 years old</i></p> <p><b><u>Annual fee £382</u></b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>6 month fee £214</b></p>	<p><b>£443 for 1 year</b></p> <p><b>£1190 for 3 years</b></p>

<u>Re-Test</u>	Fee
<p><b>Medical Re-Test</b></p> <p><u>Vehicle Re-test</u></p> <p><u>Interim Safety Check Re-Test</u></p>	<p><b>£55</b></p> <p><b>Free or £39</b></p> <p><b>Free or £23</b></p>



<b>Other Charges</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<u>Late Insurance Production</u>	<b>£50</b>
<b>Plate Deposit</b>	<b>£30</b>

Fees are non refundable

**No VAT is charged on fees**

## Appendix C

### Fee Related Complaints Received During 2005

<b>Date Of Complaint</b>	<b>Nature Of Complaint</b>	<b>Action</b>
16/05/05	Refund of vehicle test fee requested, due to failure of test on initial application	No refund issued
05/05/05	Applicant questioned why he had to pay for a medical and other things he didn't have	No discretion – all inclusive fee – no refund
18/07/05	Complaint that the fees are extortionate and that licences in Sandwell cost double most other authorities	Fees are reviewed on annual basis and advertised, but difficult to compare with other Local Authorities as not 'like for like'
19/07/05	Request to transfer licence from one vehicle to another when vehicle booked in for test was involved in RTA the day before the test	No refund/transfer allowed
18/07/05	Complaint that the fees are too high	Fees reviewed and advertised annually – opportunity to object at that time
21/07/05	Customer complaint – it would improve our service if the fees were lowered – MOT over £400 badge over £100, no need	Fees reviewed and advertised annually – opportunity to object at that time
19/08/05	Late Production of Insurance	Charged £50 fee for late production – no refund given
14/09/05	Fees should be the same	Fees reviewed and advertised annually – opportunity to object at that time
08/11/05	Vehicle recently tested and then broke down – had to pay new fee for replacement vehicle	No refund given
30/11/05	Vehicle failed garage test – complainant had to purchase a 'replacement' vehicle and pay another fee	No refund given

## Summary Of Complaints

<b>Type Of Complaint</b>	<b>Number Of Complaints Received</b>
Late Insurance Production Fee	1
Request for fees to be lowered or to remain the same	4
Refund Of Licence Fee	5