

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE  
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH ON 18 JULY 2013**

**Members Present:** Councillors Thacker (Chairman), Peach (Vice Chairman), Serluca, Jamil, Saltmarsh and Miners

**Officers Present:** Adrian Day, Licensing Manager  
Gemma George, Senior Governance Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Allen and Councillor Kreling

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**4. Taxi Licensing Fees Increase**

The Committee received a report which provided background information surrounding the proposed increase in taxi licencing fees and an overview of the representations received during the statutory notice period.

The Committee was requested to consider the contents of the report, and the representations received, and to set a further date, no later than two months after the first specified date of 1 August 2013, on which the variation would come into force with or without modification.

Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, set out the procedures for increasing the fees for vehicle and operators' licences and any other sums as determined by the Council. The fees charged should be sufficient to cover the service provided and may not result in any profit.

The Committee was advised of the profit and loss for taxi licensing for year 2012/13 and it was demonstrated that the department was running on a deficit of nearly £35k. The only way to address the deficit was to increase the income brought in, as may not be used from elsewhere, thus as there had been no increase in the taxi licensing fees since 2009, an increase was proposed as appropriate.

Since the last increase, an internal review of the service had taken place which identified a number of areas within the regime that were not sufficiently covered by the current fees charged, therefore it was considered necessary to adjust, and in some cases add, new charges and a schedule of the proposed taxi licensing fees was presented to the Committee for consideration.

During debate, comments raised and responses to questions included:

- Further fee increases could be proposed at any time, however it was considered that the current proposals, if agreed by the Committee, would reduce the deficit by the following year;
- There were a number of factors behind the £35k deficit including;
  - i) There had been no fee increases over the previous four years;
  - ii) Services had been re-located, which had caused a drop in efficiency; and
  - iii) Counsel was employed for court cases and the award of costs were, on average, in the region of £200-£250.
- There were plans to reduce the administration side of the service to allow for officers to be less office based, and the provision of a permanent booth at Bayard Place was also proposed. The provision of a value for money service was of the utmost importance to the council;
- If the service remained in deficit, there would be the possibility of further staff reductions;
- There was no upper limit to the number of private hire or hackney carriage vehicles in the city. Capping the number of hackney carriages would lead to an increase in the black market value of licence plates;
- An overview of other additional costs to the service was provided, including provision of door stickers, data requests from insurance companies, doctors note requests, plate transfers, DVLA checks and the printing of fare cards;
- It was reiterated that the service was not permitted to make a profit. Any additional funds were placed into the reserve;
- The consultation process was outlined including adverts being placed in the local newspaper, to which there had been no responses received;
- Vehicles had to be tested every six months for reasons of safety. It was advised that a number of vehicles were failing their first tests; and
- An increase in fees may mean that drivers had less money to spend on the upkeep of their vehicles. In response, it was advised that savings were being explored to pass onto the trade, in particular around the servicing of vehicles.

Following debate and questions to officers, Members acknowledged that times were hard financially, however there had been no fee increases in four years and therefore the proposed increases were deemed appropriate in this instance.

**RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the report, had due regard to the representations received and agreed that the variation to the taxi licensing fees, with modification, was to take effect from 1 August 2013.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The decision was made to comply with the statutory requirements regarding increasing the fees for vehicle and operators' licences.

7.00pm – 7.35pm  
Chairman