

**WALSALL COUNCIL**

**From:** CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES      **To:**

**Copy** TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE      **Date:** 22 JULY, 2009  
**Resolutions:** LIAISON GROUP

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**(b) Application Fee**

Mr. Hussain asked why a £25 application fee was charged. In reply Mrs. Smith explained that vehicles needed to satisfy certain criteria before they could be considered for licensing. The necessary checks were done by Licensing Officers and the fee was an administration cost that reflected officers time. Mr. Hussain made the point that it was the mechanics job to check the vehicles. In reply, Ms. Taylor explained that there were distinct differences in the checks made. Licensing Officers checked vehicles for their suitability for licensing and mechanics checked vehicles for road worthiness. Mr. Khalid referred to the fact that licences were now issued for a year which made licensing offices less congested and questioned why there was a need for the checks and the charge.

Mr. Hussain expressed the view that there was no need for the charge and asked that a report be prepared for submission to Licensing and Safety Committee to consider removal of the charge.

It was **AGREED** accordingly.



# Walsall Council

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## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PUBLIC PROTECTION

### TO A MEETING OF THE LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009 @ 6.00PM

### INITIAL APPLICATION FEE FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE / PRIVATE HIRE

#### VEHICLE LICENCES

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For members to consider the justification for the £25.00 initial application fee to licence a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.
- 1.2 This report has been produced at the request of the Taxi Liaison Group following that meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the contents of the report and determine whether this initial application fee should remain.

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Within Budget: Yes.

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Accords with Council Policy.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

#### 6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 None arising from this report.

#### 7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.1 None.

## **8. BACKGROUND**

8.1 Fees for all forms of taxi licence applications were introduced in 2005 following a report to the Taxi Liaison Group on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

8.2 The report was prepared following discussions with the trade and other licensing authorities and, amongst other things, identified areas where work was carried out but no charge was being made.

8.3 One such area was applications for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences, where a one off fee of £25 was introduced to cover the cost of

- Inspection of the vehicle
- Inspection of required ancillary equipment
- Inspection of the vehicle's documentation
- Production of records via licensing software
- Complete application form

8.4 Inspection of the vehicle will in some circumstances involve ensuring the vehicle is of suitable design and type for licensing, have modifications been made or has an existing vehicle been converted. Seating capacity will also be determined, is the vehicle the correct colour specification.

8.5 Vehicle documentation is checked. This ensures that the applicant for the licence is the registered keeper of the vehicle and, the vehicle is within prescribed age limits in order to be licensed. Any existing documentation supplied (M.O.T) by the applicant is also recorded

8.6 The licensing officer will after all checks, then complete the application form and authorise the vehicle to be tested at the Councils test centre.

8.7 If a vehicle is found not to comply with licensing requirements the applicant is free to withdraw the application. Therefore, if no application fee is payable the cost will be met from the general licensing fund.

8.8 The trade have stated that they already pay for a vehicle examination at the Councils testing centre (£45) and that an inspection by the licensing unit is unnecessary. However, the inspection carried out by the licensing unit is to test for conformity with the authorities policy and conditions. The testing centre ensures that the vehicle is compliant in terms of mechanical fitness and is fit for purpose in order to be used by the fare paying public.

8.9 The payment of an application fee not only allows cost recovery of licensing officers' time but also ensures that licence applicants have compliant vehicles prior to actual vehicle testing.

8.10 Once a vehicle has been satisfactorily tested at the Councils garage the vehicle licence is issued for 12 months at a cost of either £215 or £165 dependant on the age of that vehicle.

**9.0 Contact Officer**

9.1 Steve Knapper Ext 2221