

General Licensing Committee		Agenda Item: 6
Meeting Date	27 January 2015	
Report Title	Fare Structure and Licence Fees	
Cabinet Member	Cllr Kenneth Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health	
SMT Lead	Brian Planner	
Head of Service	Brian Planner	
Lead Officer	Ian Mackenzie	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	Reference number: N/A	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That no changes are made to the current fare structure. 2. That the annual drivers licence fee is increased by £5 from £50 to £55 and that the three year licence is increased by £5 from £120 to £125. 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on the review of fares for hackney carriages and recommends that no changes are made to the current fare structure. The report also recommends that there should be a slight change to the Drivers Licence Fee to cover the cost of DLVA licence checks.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles Committee has previously agreed that the fare structure and licence fee should be reviewed at six monthly intervals. The last increase in the fare structure was agreed by the Licensing Committee in July 2013 and came into effect at the beginning of October that year. The change applied at that time was to increase the flag fall by 10p to £2.80. No change was made to the fare structure or driver and vehicle licence fees when last reviewed in July 2014.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 A review of fares was considered at a recent liaison meeting with operators although only two operators attended this meeting.
- 3.2 As the rate of inflation over the past year has been low and the cost of fuel in particular has gone down it was felt by those present at the liaison meeting that there was no need to change the current fare structure. Some operating costs have increased which seem to be balanced out by reduced fuel costs and so the operators view seems realistic that there should be no change to the fare structure.
- 3.3 It is therefore recommended that there should be no change made to the current fare structure.
- 3.4 In general the current licence fees charged for vehicle and driver licensing are estimated to meet the operating costs in the coming year for the current processes and procedures. However, there are issues in relation to checks carried out on drivers DVLA which could increase costs.
- 3.5 An annual check is made on a drivers DVLA drivers licence to ensure that it is still valid and that it does not hold more than 6 penalty points as required by the Local Conditions. This requires drivers to bring the paper copy of the licence into the office so that it can be checked and validated. In the future it is understood that the paper section of the licence will be withdrawn leaving only the plastic card holding basic information.
- 3.6 It is possible to undertake a check of a drivers DVLA licence electronically through a subscription service. This ensures that the information is valid and up to date and avoids the need for drivers to attend the office. This would be the preferred method of checking licenses although there is a cost to this service of just over £5/check which could not be accommodated within the existing licensing income.
- 3.7 It is therefore proposed that the annual drivers licence fee is increased by £5 from £50 to £55 and that the three year licence is also increased by £5 from £120 to £125. Although within a 3 year licence there will still be a need to check annually it is considered that the additional costs could be covered within the fee charged.
- 3.8 This issue was discussed at the operators liaison meeting and those present thought that an additional £5 on a three year licence reasonable and that this might encourage a greater take up of the three year licence.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative would be to consider increasing or reducing fares. However, any increase would be detrimental to fare paying passengers as there are no

substantial identified increases in operating costs. Also overall company operating costs have not reduced significantly since the last review and to reduce fares would therefore have a detrimental impact on operator's ability to maintain a service.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with operators at a Liaison meeting held on 7th January 2014. In addition copies of this committee report are sent to all operators.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Contributes to the overall priority of making swale a better place.
Financial, Resource and Property	The proposed increase in driver licence fees would keep the operation of the licensing service within budget.
Legal and Statutory	Any increase in the hackney carriage fare structure would need to be advertised in local newspapers for setting out the procedure and period for objections.
Crime and Disorder	No particular implications although the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire service supports the night time economy.
Sustainability	Hackney Carriages play an important role in the provision of public transport in the Borough and provide a positive impact to sustainable transport.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

None.