

LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Tuesday, 16th August 2011 at 18:30 North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester

Membership: Cllrs. Noakes (Chair), Porter (Vice-Chair), Tracey, Durrant, C. Witts,

Ravenhill, Wilson, Field, Dallimore, Hansdot, Mozol, Patel and Toleman

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Said Hansdot

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive from Members, declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 overleaf.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2011.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

To receive any questions from members of the public provided that a question does not relate to:

- Matters which are the subject of current or pending legal proceedings, or
- Matters relating to employees or former employees of the Council or comments in respect of individual Council Officers

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (10 MINUTES, MAXIMUM 3 MINUTES PER PERSON)

To receive any petitions and deputations provided that no such petition is in relation to:

- Matters relating to individual Council Officers, or
- Matters relating to current or pending legal proceedings

Licensing and Enforcement Committee

Tuesday, 16 August 2011

6. SECTION 48 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS)
ACT 1976 - APPLICATION FOR A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCE BY MR
LUKE BENNETT (Pages 5 - 20)

Report of the Group Manager, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services.

7. FEES FOR VEHICLES, OPERATORS AND DRIVERS LICENCES 2011/2012 (Pages 21 - 28)

Report of the Group Manager, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 13th September at 18.30 hours.

Julian Wain Chief Executive

Notes

- 1. A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District:-
 - (a) the well being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;
 - (b) a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;
 - (c) any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
 - (d) the Councillor's registrable financial and other interests.
- 2. A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Please contact Adam Chalmers, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, Tel. No. 01452 396125/e-mail: committeesection@gloucester.gov.uk if you have a general query on any agenda item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from

the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Council.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's Website - www.gloucester.gov.uk

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LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING: Tuesday, 19th July 2011

PRESENT: Cllrs. Noakes (Chair), Durrant, C. Witts, Wilson, Dallimore, Taylor,

Hansdot, Mozol, Patel and Toleman

Officers in Attendance

Gill Ragon, Group Manager, Environmental Health and Regulatory

Services

Lisa Wilkes, Food Safety and Licensing Service Manager

Tony Moseley, Licensing Enforcement Officer

Steve Isaac, Solicitor Sonia Tucker (Secretary)

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Porter, Ravenhill and Field

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions from the public.

15. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (10 MINUTES, MAXIMUM 3 MINUTES PER PERSON)

There were no petitions or deputations.

16. APPLICATION FOR A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCE BY MR MOHAMMED SANNEH

The Licensing Officer outlined the appeal by Mr Mohammed Sanneh against an officer decision to refuse to issue a private hire vehicle licence to vehicle BMW 525, registration number SB06 BKD, on the grounds that it did not meet the age specification required by the Council's vehicle licensing conditions by a period of 24 days.

The City Council was empowered under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to licence private hire vehicles and to apply conditions to the issue of such licences. A condition for the first time of licensing a private hire vehicle which came into effect on 1st June 2010 stipulated 'vehicles will not be accepted for licensing on the first occasion after 5 years from the date of first

LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE 19.07.11

registration, regardless of whether it was previously licensed anywhere else in the Uk, or re-licensed 10 years from the date of first registration'.

The Licensing and Enforcement Officer reminded Members that in May 2003, the Council's General Conditions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing contained the wording 'will not normally be accepted' in place of the above, thus allowing Officer and Member discretion when deciding the merits of an individual case. It was noted that at present, the discretion rested only with Members to exempt vehicles from the Conditions on an individual merits basis.

Mr Sanneh had been a licensed Private Hire driver since December 2004. He purchased the vehicle, which had been first registered with the DVLA on 19th May 2006, on 27th May 2011. The Private Hire vehicle licence application was received by the Licensing Team on 10th June 2011, which meant that the vehicle had failed to meet, by 24 days, the City Council's specific condition relating to age and a vehicle's acceptance for licensing on the first occasion.

In a letter to the Licensing Team, Mr Sanneh explained that he had misunderstood the '5 year rule'. He added that he had further invested in the car to improve its comfort and specification and requested that the matter be referred, as an appeal against the officer decision, to the Licensing and Enforcement Committee.

The vehicle had subsequently been inspected by a Licensing and Enforcement Officer at the City Council's offices on 6th July 2011 and proved to meet all other licensing requirements.

Members were advised that they had two options:-

(a) To refuse the application on the grounds that the vehicle did not meet the criteria for licensing due to its age.

Or

(b) To accept the application on the grounds that the vehicle was of such a high standard for its age that the relevant condition should be waived in this particular case.

In making their deliberations, Members were advised that as they had made the decision to adopt the age policy in the first place they also had the power to depart from the policy in exceptional cases. The age policy had been set in order to maintain the standards of the licensed fleet and once licensed a vehicle could continue to be licensed up to the age of 10 years. Members were further advised that it might also be prudent to consider changing the wording of the condition at some stage in the future, after consultation with the Trade, in order that the Council was seen to be flexible and demonstrated that it considered each case on its merits. This would protect the Council from any potential legal challenge where an applicant took the Condition on its face value.

Mrs Sanneh, representing the appellant, was then invited to address the Committee and to answer any questions.

A Member asked Mrs Sanneh if the appellant had a copy of the relevant Handbook which set out the '5 year rule' and whether he had read it. The Member also

LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE 19.07.11

pointed out that the '5 year rule' would have been contained within the licensing application form which Mr Sanneh had completed.

Mrs Sanneh confirmed that Mr Sanneh did have the Handbook. She explained that there had been a misunderstanding over the exact meaning of the '5 year rule'. There had been no deliberate intention to contravene the Council's rules.

The Chair agreed a short recess whilst Members retired to inspect the vehicle outside the Council offices.

Members then discussed the following points:-

- The vehicle was an executive car in excellent condition and would be a credit to a licensed fleet.
- The policy was intended to maintain the standards of the fleet, but there was a need to be flexible and that Members had discretion as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report.
- It was felt that the appellant had made a genuine oversight and had misunderstood the exact meaning of the '5 year rule'.

RESOLVED

That the application be accepted on the grounds that the vehicle was of such a high standard for its age that the relevant condition should be waived in this particular case.

17. DRAFT SEX ESTABLISHMENTS POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee reviewed the outcome of the consultation on the draft Sex Establishment Policy Statement and considered the revised final Sex Establishment Policy Statement. The Committee had considered the draft policy statement at its meeting on 18 January 2011 and had approved it for consultation.

The Committee noted and discussed the following issues and points:

- That the City Council could not take any moral stand in adopting a Sex Establishments Policy and that it was the Council's role as the Licensing Authority to administer the licensing regime for such establishments in accordance with the law.
- The Council had only received one formal response to the consultation process and this was detailed at appendix C of the report.
- The proposed amendments to the policy detailed at paragraphs 4.8, 4.10 and 4.11 of the report that were recommended.
 It was agreed to amend the final bullet point of paragraph 4.8 to read: "The proximity of any other premises that is, or may be, frequently visited by children"
- The statement would take immediate effect from when it was approved to ensure that premises were undertaking activities in accordance with the policy.

RESOLVED

LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE 19.07.11

- 1. That the draft Sex Establishments Policy Statement and consultation feedback be noted.
- 2. That the proposed amendments as detailed in paragraphs 4.8, 4.10 and 4.11 were noted and recommended for inclusion in the final Sex Establishment Policy Statement. Members agreed that the amendment to 4.8 should state "The proximity of any other premises that **may** be frequently visited by children".
- 3. That the revised Sex Establishments Policy Statement, as amended, be recommended to Full Council for approval.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16th August 2011 at 6.30 pm.

Time of commencement: 18:30 hours

Time of conclusion: 19:19 hours

Chair

Gloucester City Council

Committee	: LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
Date	: 16 AUGUST 2011
Subject	: APPLICATION FOR A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE
	LICENCE BY MR LUKE BENNETT UNDER SECTION 48
	OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS
	PROVISIONS) ACT 1976
Ward	: ALL
Report by	: GROUP MANAGER, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH &
	REGULATORY SERVICES
No. of Appendices	: A: EXTRACT FROM PRIVATE HIRE RULE BOOK JUNE
	2010 ENTITLED 'VEHICLE AGE AND TESTING'
	B: COPY OF APPLICATION PAPERWORK
Reference No.	: ES21118

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To outline to Members an application by Mr Luke Bennett for a new private hire vehicle licence for a Vauxhall Vectra SRI NAV registration number FP06 PPZ. The application is before the committee on the grounds that it does not meet the age specification required by the Council's policy on the age of vehicles.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Having considered the application, Council policy and Mr Bennett's submissions, Members have the following options:
 - (a) To refuse the application on the grounds that the vehicle falls outside of Council policy on the age of vehicles that can be accepted for licensing on the first occasion.
 - (b) To accept the application on the grounds that the vehicle is of such a high standard for its age that Council policy should be departed from in this particular case.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The City Council has statutory power under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to licence private hire vehicles. The Council is able to adopt a policy in relation to the licensing of private hire vehicles and is able to attach conditions to the grant of such licences.
- 3.2 Private hire vehicles are licensed under section 48 of the above Act, which states:
 - "48 Licensing of private hire vehicles.
 - (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, a district council may on the receipt of an application from the proprietor of any vehicle for the grant in respect of such vehicle of a licence to use the vehicle as a private hire vehicle, grant in respect thereof a vehicle licence:

Provided that a district council shall not grant such a licence unless they are satisfied—

- (a) that the vehicle is—
 - (i) suitable in type, size and design for use as a private hire vehicle;
 - (ii) not of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage;
 - (iii) in a suitable mechanical condition;
 - (iv) safe; and
 - (v) comfortable;
- (b) that there is in force in relation to the use of the vehicle a policy of insurance or such security as complies with the requirements of [F1Part VI of the Road Traffic Act 1988],

and shall not refuse such a licence for the purpose of limiting the number of vehicles in respect of which such licences are granted by the council."

- 3.3 Current Council policy and conditions are contained in the Private Hire Rule Book which was approved by Members at their meeting on 19 January 2010 and came into force on 01 June 2010.
- 3.4 The current policy includes a requirement in relation to the age of a vehicle at the first time of licensing (**Appendix A** Extract from Private Hire Rule Book) and states:-
 - "3.22 Vehicles must comply with the following conditions in relation to age and length of service:
 - a vehicles will not be accepted for licensing on the first occasion after 5 years from the date of first registration regardless of whether it was previously licensed anywhere else in the UK, or re-licensed after 10 years from the date of first registration."
- 3.5 An earlier edition (May 2003) of the Council's General Conditions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing contained the wording "will not normally be accepted" in place of the above thus allowing for Officer and Member discretion when deciding the merits of a particular case.

4.0 Information

- 4.1 Mr Luke Bennett is not currently a licensed private hire driver with Gloucester City Council. He has previously held both a private hire driver and vehicle licence with Cheltenham Borough Council. Mr Bennett has indicated that he is currently out of work and wishes to return to work in the private hire trade within Gloucester as he lives in the City. Due to financial constraints Mr Bennett will not be applying for a private hire driver licence with the Council until the application for his vehicle is determined.
- 4.2 The vehicle was first registered with the DVLA on 2 June 2006.

- 4.3 Mr Bennett submitted a request to licence the vehicle which was received on 27 July 2011. He was contacted by a Licensing & Enforcement Officer to request some additional paperwork which was subsequently received on 28 July 2011. All relevant paperwork is attached at **Appendix B**. From receipt of the initial request the vehicle failed to meet Council age policy by eight weeks.
- 4.4 Mr Bennett's letter at **Appendix B** details his justification for the Council to depart from its age policy. Mr Bennett states that his vehicle is in excellent condition, he is the second registered keeper, it has 70,000 miles on the clock, the vehicle has passed an MoT, passed a Council vehicle inspection check and that he has no means of affording a replacement vehicle.
- 4.5 The vehicle will be available for inspection by Members during the Committee meeting in order that they may make a first-hand appraisal of it's suitability for licensing.
- 4.6 With the exception of a certificate of insurance for hire and reward Mr Bennett has supplied all necessary documentation required. Should the Committee be minded to approve the application a valid certificate of insurance would be required before the grant of the licence in order to comply with s48(1)(b) of the 1976 Act.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Members are referred to the options at 2.1(a) and (b) of this report.
- 5.2 Following the case of *R v Hyndburn Borough Council, ex parte Rauf and Kasim* (12 Feb 1992, QBD, unreported) it is possible to have a policy in relation to the age of vehicles. However the policy cannot be an immutable rule, and as such the Council cannot fetter its discretion by rigidly following the policy without treating each case on its merits.
- 5.3 The current age policy was adopted by Members. As such the Committee has the power to depart from the policy if the application is considered to be an exceptional case and that the vehicle meets the criteria for licensing.
- 5.4 It should be borne in mind that the justification behind the age policy is in order to maintain the standards of the licensed vehicle fleet and that furthermore, once licensed, a vehicle may continue to be licensed up to the age of 10 years old (Appendix A Extract from Private Hire Rule Book).
- 5.5 Should Members be satisfied that all criteria specified in s48(1) of the 1976 Act are met, then the only justification for refusing the application is on the grounds that the vehicle does not comply with the current Council policy.
- 5.6 If Members decide to depart from the policy in this instance, considered reasons will be required in order to show the justification for departing from the policy. Members should note that any decision to depart from the policy will set a precedent when considering any future applications. While any future applications would need to be considered on their own merits, if future cases could not be distinguished from this application then the rationale followed in this case would need to be applied.

5.7 Should Members decide to follow Council policy and refuse the application considered reasons will also have to be given.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications relating to this report.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There have been a number of legal cases regarding the appropriateness of conditions that purport to restrict the age of vehicles for licensing.
- 7.2 The majority of the legal implications are covered in the body of the report.
- 7.3 It is lawful for the Council to impose a policy that no licence would be issued to a vehicle over a certain age, but on any application the Council must consider it on merit, to see if the vehicle meets the Council objectives behind the age restriction. The objectives should include such matters as safety, reliability and comfort.
- 7.4 In making its decision, the Committee needs to give full reasons that are linked to the reasoning behind the age restriction.
- 7.5 There is a right of appeal against a refusal to grant a Private Hire Vehicle Licence to the Magistrates' Court.

8.0 Risk Management Implications

8.1 The risk of an appeal to Magistrates should an inappropriate or unreasonable decision be made *and the potential for a financial penalty to be incurred.*

9.1 People Impact Assessment (PIA)

9.1 PIA is not required for such Private Hire cases as there are no adverse impacts or any risks to customers in the areas of gender, disability, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or community cohesion.

Any Further Relevant Information

None

10.0 Other Corporate Implications

10.1 None

Background Papers: Gloucester City Council Licensing Hearing Procedure

Published Papers : The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Gloucester City Council's Private Hire Rule Book

Person to Contact : Carl Knights, Licensing & Enforcement Officer

Tel: 396311

E-mail: carl.knights@gloucester.gov.uk

ES21118 APPENDIX A

EXTRACT FROM PRIVATE HIRE RULE BOOK JUNE 2010

Vehicle Age and Testing

- 3.22 Vehicles must comply with the following conditions in relation to age and length of service:
 - a vehicles will not be accepted for licensing on the first occasion after 5 years from the date of the first registration regardless of whether it was previously licensed anywhere else in the UK, or re-licensed after 10 years from the date of the first registration.
 - b the vehicle shall be removed from service on the 10th anniversary from the date of the first registration, any outstanding licence shall be transferred onto a new vehicle free of charge for the remainder of that current licence.
 - c all vehicles must be tested annually to the current Licensing Authority standards. Once the vehicle has reached the age of 8 years since manufacture, the vehicle shall be tested at 6 monthly intervals until it has reached its service limit of 10 years since manufacture.
 - d if the condition of the vehicle deteriorates below the acceptable standard set in the Licensing Authority vehicle test at anytime during the working life of the vehicle, the Licensing Officer reserves the right to withdraw the licence.

ES21118 APPENDIX B

Mr Luke Bennett

25th July 2011



FTAO: Licensing Department

. To whom it may concern

I write this letter in order to request that my vehicle a Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 petrol vvt sat navi, registered 02.06.06, be considered before the committee for licensing by Gloucester City Council.

Having been made redundant from my job due to company restructuring a few months ago. I have since decided to return to being a taxi driver, having been a licensed taxi driver in Cheltenham whilst living there March 2008 to March 2009 using the above vehicle.

As I now live in Gloucester where I was born and have lived for most of my life, it made perfect sense to now register my vehicle here as I am still a registered licensed driver. However, upon contacting the Gloucester licensing Department 15th July '11, I was informed that my vehicle was beyond the 5 year threshold by all of 5 weeks which had now been implemented, to which I knew nothing off.

After explaining to the licensing officer that my vehicle is in excellent condition; with myself being the second owner from new, with just 70k FSH registered miles and just taxed and tested 06.07.11, could I be reconsidered as I have no other means of affording another vehicle. It was then that I was informed to go through this route.

Therefore, I ask that you the committee consider my vehicle for licensing and that you take into consideration that I have taken the liberty of providing further evidence of my vehicle's road worthiness, via the inclusive vehicle licensing report undertaken on my vehicle by your own registered depot.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Luke Bennett

Gloucester City Council

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For more information go to: www.tirect.gov.uk/mute/ing

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MOT Test Certificate



This certificate has been issued according to the conditions and notes on the back of this certificate.

Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

Note: If you have doubts as to whether this certificate is valid, please use the service described in note 3 overleaf to check.

MOT test number 368828481186 Make

VAUXHALL

Odometer reading 70636 Miles

Registration mark

Model

Test class TV

FP06PPZ

VECTRA

Vehicle identification or chassis number WOLOZCF6861108286

Colour BLUE

Expiry date

issue date/time

JULY 6th 2012 TWELVE!

JULY 7th 2011

(ELEVEN) 16:11

Additional Information

To preserve the anniversary of the expiry date the earliest you can present your vehicle for test is 07/06/2012

Want a reminder? Text MOT No. to 66848. Cost £1.50. Subscribing confirms acceptance of TACS. Go to www.direct.gov.uk/motreminders

Advisory Notice Issued

NO

for information.

Test station number

77610

For all vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats

Seat belt installation checked this test

N/A

Number of seat belts fitted at time of installation check.

Previous installation check date

Issuer's name in CAPITALS

S. J. COOK

Signature of Issuer

Warning: A test certificate is not evidence that the vehicle is in a satisfactory condition.

Check carefully that the above details are correct. Do not accept a certificate which has been altered.

Affix sticker to inside of windscreen as a reminder

Reg Mark

FPOGPPZ

Make

VAUXHALL

Test

Station

MOT Expiry

77610

JULY 6th 2012 (TWELVE)

Inspection Authority

CITY AUTOTUNE MILLBROOK STREET GLOUCESTER

GL1 4BG

01452522922

Gloucester City Council

PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE INSPECTION SHEET

Name of Approved Testing Station	HEMPSTED MOTOR CONTRO LTD.
Date of Vehicle Inspection	25/07/N
Vehicle Registration & Plate No	FPCGPPZ /
Make & Model	VAVAHALL VGCTRA (PGTROL
Mileage	70981
ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION	PASS FAIL DEFECTS/COMMENTS
Engine oil level	
Mater level radiator and cooling system	
Fuel leaks	- I
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INTERIOR Cont	PASS	FAIL	DEFECTS/GOMMENTS
Heating/ventilation system working	V		
Headlining/door panels/carpets clean good condition	4		
Luggage restraint fitted and working (not saloons)	NA		
Double sided interior plate displayed in windscreen pouch	No	5-66	0
Two-way radio/phone handsfree kit safely & securely installed	NOT	8-66N	
Spare wheel/jack/brace fitted and working	~		
Meter securely mounted in conspicuous position (where fitted)	NO	V 566V	
Tariff card displayed in prominent position (where meter fitted)	NC	T.666	0
EXTERIOR			
Bodywork in good condition (dents/scratches/discoloration)	1		
Mirrors missing loose or damaged			
Wheel trims missing or damaged			
Aerials intact			
External plate firmly fixed to the rear of vehicle and in good condition	NOT	8600	
External plate firmly fixed to the front of vehicle and in good condition	NOVE	en:	
Door panels must be fitted and in good condition	NOTE	en.	
CHASSIS AND CHASSIS MOUNTED COMPONENTS			
Steering components/linkage wear and security			
Play in king pins/thrust bearings	ru j		
Wheels do not foul on full lock	-		
Wheel bearings for excessive play	-		
Power steering operation and leaks			
Springs fro cracks, worn or displaced			
U bolts for tightness	W/	A	
Wear in bushes	-		

CHASSIS AND CHASSIS MOUNTED	PASS	FAIL	DEFECTS/COMMENTS	4.9869
COMPONENTS Cont	1.4		A STATE OF THE STA	di Allanda
Shock absorbers condition	1	1-		
Brake fluid level/leaks		-		
Servo/brake pipes/cables condition	1			
Brake linings pads and discs condition				
Fuel tank/pipes leaks and condition	1-			
Wiring condition and security				
Exhaust pipe/boxes condition and security				
Chassis-damage/corrosion				
WHEELS AND TYRES			The state of the s	
Wheel rims-cracks/damage/corrosion	\ \ \ .	t		
Tyres-correct type/pressure/damage/tread depth		-		
LIGHTS AND ELECTRICS				
Battery and cradie-clean and secure	-			
Electrolyte level				
All lights working/correct bulbs	1			
Meter working accurately (3 rates)	NOS	5667		
ROAD TEST				
Operation of foot and hand brakes		1		
Clutch for excess travel/slip/judder				
Steering for noise/stiffness/free play/self centre/wheel imbalance	_			
Suspension for noise/ride/nandling				
Operation of speedo/gauges/warning	_			

Signature of person carrying out inspection	

Gloucester City Council

Committee	: LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
Date	: 16 th AUGUST 2011
Subject	: FEES FOR VEHICLES, OPERATORS AND
	DRIVERS LICENCES 2011/2012
Decision Type	: POLICY AND FRAMEWORK
Ward	: ALL
Report By	: GROUP MANAGER OF ENVIRONMENTAL
	HEALTH AND REGULATORY SERVICES
No. Of Appendices	: 1. PROPOSED FEES
	2. OBJECTION FROM HACKNEY CARRIAGE
	ASSOCIATION
	3. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS
	4. DfT BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE 2010
Reference No.	: ES21117

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To determine the level of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence fees for 2011/12.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee are recommended to increase all existing taxi fees and charges by 2.5% from 17th August 2011.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Taxi licence fee setting is a function of the Licensing Committee. Legislation permits the Council to set **vehicle and operator** licence fees to cover the whole or part of:-
 - the cost of carrying out inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to determine whether any such licence should be granted or renewed;
 - the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands; and
 - any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.
- 3.2 Where this fee exceeds £25, as is the case at Gloucester City Council, a 28 day public notice of the proposed fee must be advertised within which time any person may object to the variations.
- 3.3 If no objections are made or if all objections are withdrawn the fees come into effect at the end of the 28 day period. Where objections are not withdrawn, the Council must then consider the objections before determining the fee level and setting a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the new fees shall come into force. This date must not exceed 11th September 2011.

- 3.4 In relation to **other taxi licence fees and charges**, (e.g. drivers, knowledge tests) fees should recover reasonable expenses incurred to issue licences, administer and control the service. There are no consultation or advertising requirements.
- 3.5 The effect of the legislation is that the service must not generate a "profit" to the Council.

4.0 Progress

- 4.1 2011/12 fees have been calculated in accordance with our budget over a 3 yearly plan and in-line with the Council's overall increase in fees and charges as agreed by Full Council.
- 4.2 Consultation with the trade has taken place. A Public Notice was published in the Citizen on Friday 10th June 2011. One objection was received from the Hackney Carriage Association, a copy of this e-mail can be found in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 Last year's actual income and expenditure, together with this and next year's budget are provided at Appendix 3. This information was shared with the Chair of the HCA on 12th July 2011. No further response has been received.
- 4.4 In 2010/11 fees were reduced by 5% post negotiation with the trade and following the introduction of 2 and 3 year drivers licences. Take up of the 2 and 3 year renewals were much higher than estimated in 2010/11 at the lower charge. This will impact 2011/12 income and year end position, as fewer drivers will be renewing their licence within that period.
- 4.5 The 2010/11 fee reduction was not in line with general Gloucester City Council fees and charges, which were increased by 5% as agreed by Full Council.

5.0 Future Work

- 5.1 A summary of proposed fees and charges as advertised in the Public Notice is provided at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 A comparative list of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing fees and charges from other Local Authorities can be provided on request. Members must note however, that any comparison does not reveal where that Authority sits in line with its overall income and expenditure accounts. For example, last year our fees were reduced by 5% to bring us back in line with our accounts.
- 5.2 In response to the Trade's objection regarding the plan to conduct further scrutiny studies. The Licensing Authority have decided that if needed, conducting a scrutiny study every 3 years would be good practice to monitor the demand for Taxi's in the City, especially as the trade have requested a restriction in the number of licensed Hackney Carriages. A study was conducted in 2010 and revealed no evidence of a significant unmet demand.

- 5.3 The Department for Transport best practice guidance indicates that a study every three years is good practice where the Local Authority has imposed a restriction on the number of licensed Taxis. However, where there is no quantity restriction, a study is not needed and the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance 2010 recommends that licensing authorities do not impose restrictions on the number of licences issued.
- 5.4 The relevant guidance page can be seen in Appendix 4.
- 5.5 Section 161 of the Equalities Act 2010 which was viewed to come into force some time after April 2011 would restrict the ability of licensing authorities to control the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles where the authority has relatively few numbers of wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- 5.6 The purpose of this is to ensure licensing authorities that have relatively few wheelchair accessible taxis operating in their area, do not refuse licences to such vehicles for the purposes of controlling taxi numbers. For section 161 to have effect, the Secretary of State must make regulations specifying:
 - the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis that must operate in an area before
 the respective licensing authority is lawfully able to refuse to license such a
 vehicle on the grounds of controlling taxi numbers; and
 - the dimensions of a wheelchair that a wheelchair accessible vehicle must be capable of carrying in order for it to fall within this provision.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Overall income is expected to be lower in 11/12 due to the increased income received in 10/11 from a large uptake of 2 and 3 year licences. Costs will also increase in 11/12 due to higher levels of work from other services contributing towards the licenses.
- 6.2 The proposed fees are set at levels that recover the costs of issuing, administering and enforcing Licences. The Licensing Authority must not increase fees with a view to make a profit, however, where surplus income is received it is intended to bring income projections in line with expenditure over 3 yearly periods.
- 6.3 Members are referred to the recommendation noted in 2.0 of this report.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The fee levels are set to ensure costs of issuing, administering and enforcing licences can be recovered. The proposed fee increase of 2.5% will ensure that the level of income in 2011/12 is nearer to budget and when set against expected higher costs for that year, this will mean that over a 3 year period the hackney carriages and private hire licenses should break even.
- 7.2 Fees would need to be set in line with the European Services Directive: Guidance for Local Authorities and LACORS Guidance on the impact of the Services Directive on Councils setting and administering local licence fees within the service sector.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 gives the Council powers to charge such fees for the grant of vehicle and operator licences as may be resolved by them from time to time. There are statutory procedures to be followed regarding advertisements, notices, consultation and representations.
- 8.2 Section 53(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that the fees for hackney carriage and driving licences have to be reasonable. There is no statutory requirement for advertisements, notices, consultation or representations. There is also no restriction on the number of times the Council can increase the fees, however, the Council's actions must be reasonable.
- **9.0 Risk Management Implications** (Authors to complete) Identify all key risks (scoring 8 and above) for the recommendation including the impact and likelihood of the risk occurring and what measures will be taken to mitigate the risk.
- 9.1 The key risks arising from this relate to decisions taken by the Licensing and Enforcement Committee. Any decisions made which are unreasonable or unlawful could be open to legal challenge resulting in loss of image, reputation and potential financial penalty.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

Please ensure you complete this section even if a PIA is not required.

Is a PIA required?	Yes	No	Explanation:
	Х		
Has an initial PIA screening	Yes	No	Explanation:
been completed?	Х		
Has a full PIA been	Yes	No	Explanation:
completed?		Х	No negative impacts were identified
Is the PIA available?	Yes	No	Explanation:
		Х	
Has the PIA identified any	Yes*	No	
negative impacts on any		X	
protected characteristic or			
community cohesion?			*Please ensure PIA is available

Any Further Relevant Information:

None

11.0 Other Corporate Implications (this may include Community Safety, Environmental, Staffing, Trade Union)

None

Background Papers: None

Published Papers : The Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle

Licensing: Best Practice Guidance March 2010

Person to Contact: Lisa Wilkes

Tel: 396047

E-mail: lisa.wilkes@gloucester.gov.uk

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CIT-E01-S2

PART II, LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 SECTION 70 - FEES FOR VEHICLE AND OPERATORS' LICENCES

The Council has determined that the fees for vehicles and operators' and drivers licences

shall be varied as follows: Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 70(3)(a) of the said Act that: With effect from Monday 11th July 2011 the fees shall be:

	Present	Proposed
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£183.50	£188.00
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£183.50	£188.00
Private Hire Operator's Licence:	Gardon aca	
(up to 2 yehicles	£240.00	£246.00
(3 - 5 vehicles	£305.00	£312.50
(6 - 10 vehicles	£620.00	£635,50
(11 + vehicles	£930.00	£953.00
Charge for each additional premises on an Operators' licence (includes pre-issue check)	10 00 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1	ESCENT MANAGEMENT
NEW roles are reported to the same and	£140.00	£143.50
RENEWALS 10 (dec)	£100.00	£102.50
New Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence	£110.00	£113.00
New Private Hire Drivers Licence	£110.00	£113.00
Renewal Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence:	PORTS COM	CHOOSE CHAIN
(1 year)	£77.00	£79.00
(2 year) New Fee	£140.00	£143.50
(3 year) New Fee	£200.00	£205.00
Renewal Private Hire Drivers Licence:		
(1 year)	£77.00	£79.00
(2 year) New Fee	£140.00	£143.50
(3 year) New Fee	£200.00	£205.00

A copy of this notice shall, for a period of 28 days from today, be available for public inspection at the address below during office hours.

Any objection to the proposed variation may be made, in writing, within 28 days from today to me at the address below. Please ensure that the reasons for any objections are briefly stated. Date: 10th June 2011 Gillian Ragon

Group Manager Environmental Health Manager & Regulatory Services Herbert Warehouse

The Docks, Gloucester Fax: 01452 396340

E-mail: licence.team@gloucester.gov.uk

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Lisa Wilkes

Subject:

FW: Proposed fees increase

From: Zeya Ahmed [mailto:zey.a@virgin.net]

Sent: 08 July 2011 15:48

To: Licence Team

Cc: 'Abdul Hoque (57)'; 'Adrian Parsons (52)'; 'Alan Wood (77)'; 'Benny Hipwood (14)'; 'Brian Webb (72)'; 'Chas Rodgers (21)'; Chris Kemmett (533); 'Craig Edwards (44)'; 'Dave Green (528)'; 'Dave Green (85)'; 'Derek McKeown (32)'; 'Kam Lehal (521)'; 'Ken Duckett (27)'; 'Mark Leighton (15)'; 'Mark Powell'; 'Michael Odeny (532)'; 'Mo (94)'; Neil Gardner (74); 'Paul Burrows (66)'; Paul Elliott (5); 'Paul Gurr (98)'; 'Paul Otto (36)'; 'Shakoor Ahmed'; 'Simon Massey (65)'; 'Steve Bohan (69)'; 'Steve Odeny (517)'; 'Stuart Green (67)'; 'Stuart Watkins (41)'; Paul Hopkins (38); Phil Bartholomew (4); Lise Noakes

Subject: Proposed fees increase

On behalf of the Gloucester Hackney Carriage Association I am lodging this objection to the proposed increase. to this date, I have not received any figures for the licensing section's actual income and expenditure relating to the previous three years; all we have seen are budget projections. Using those as a rough guide, it is apparent to us that there is a considerable surplus in the licensing account even when one considers the "three year plan" approach that is being taken. There is no need for any further scrutiny studies as they are superseded by the Equalities Act and even when the department commissions one, it is unable to ensure it done correctly.

Zeya Ahmed

Chairman, GHCA

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2010/2011 2009/2010 2009/2010 Amount Budget Amount	61599.75 58,480 62909.69	1493.76 1,020 1688.85	13832.74 11.240 11422.5	4,200	340	540 0 5868 17300.89 15,780 25627.5	17,275 20,000 0		2831.79 6,620 3553.63	1049.35 2,383 1538.19	1520 2,069 2336.24	34058.83 29,750 24240.71	2,342	3,625	5577.57 4,645 16796.42	1,535	2	2008 2,928 1360.77	57269.54 59,061 63325.94	154,939 154,341 153,552	-143679.9 -135,000 -171012.7	
Account description Budget	EMPLOYEES 59,065	TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENSES 1,030	SUPPLIES & SERVICES FEES FOR SERVICES RECEIVED 14,240	VICES 4	PUBLICITY 3.	KEIMBURSEMENTS 0 18,780	STUDY	RGES		ERVICES		HEALTH SERVICES	GROUP MANAGER 2,365				ICATION SERVICES	OTHER CORPORATE 2,928	54,509	TOTAL COST 133,384	FEES138,197	25.00

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Account description	2007/2008 Amount	2008/2009 Amount	2009/2010 Budget	2010/2011 Budget	2011/2012 Budget	2012/2013 Budget	2012/2013 Budget
EMPLOYEES	59,380	53,413	58,480	59,065	59,655	60,252	60,855
CAR USER ALLOWANCES TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENSES	1,610	2,078	1,020	1,030	1,041	1,051	1,061
SALES	0	-6,480	-3,630	-3,630	-3,630	-3,630	-3,630
FEES FOR SERVICES RECEIVED	6,535	6,722	11,240	14,240	14,240	14.240	14.240
OTHER MINOR SUPPLIES SERVICES	1,089	2,314	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200
ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY	292	140	340	340	340	340	340
REIMBURSEMENTS	6,115	6,480	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	14,306	15,656	15,780	18,780	18,780	18,780	18,780
Study			20,000			25,000	
ACCOMMODATION	1,404	1,330	6,620	1,620	1,620	1,620	1,620
HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES	1,993	2,365	2,383	2,407	2,431	2,455	2,480
CUSTOMER SERVICES	3,503	2,924	2,069	2,090	2,111	2,132	2,153
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	28,340	25,840	29,750	30,048	30,048	30,048	30,048
GROUP MANAGER	2,174	2,128	2,342	2,365	2,389	2,413	2,437
DIRECTOR COSTS	3,000	3,200	3,625	3,661	3,698	3,735	3,772
LEGAL SERVICES	3,589	3,403	4,645	4,691	4,738	4,786	4,834
PERFORMANCE AND VALUE	1,607	1,450	1,535	1,535	1,535	1,535	1,535
COMMUNICATION SERVICES	1,345	2,362	2,461	2,461	2,461	2,461	2,461
FINANCE	853	089	703	703	703	703	703
OTHER CORPORATE	3,044	1,824	2,928	2,928	2,928	2,928	2,928
SUPPORT SERVICES	50,852	47,506	79,061	54,509	54,661	79,815	54,970
	126,147	112,174	150,711	129,754	130,507	156,268	132,036
FEES	-107,196	-120,596	-135,000	-138,197	-138,197	-138,197	-138,197
(Surplus) / Deficit	-18,951	-8,422	15,711	-8,443	-7,690	18,071	-6,161

QUANTITY RESTRICTIONS OF TAXI LICENCES OUTSIDE LONDON

- 1. The present legal provision on quantity restrictions for taxis outside London is set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a taxi licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed taxis 'if, but only if, the [local licensing authority] is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet'.
- 2. Local licensing authorities will be aware that, in the event of a challenge to a decision to refuse a licence, the local authority concerned would have to establish that it had, reasonably, been satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand.
- 3. Most local licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions; the Department regards that as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed, the Department would urge that the matter should be regularly reconsidered. The Department further urges that the issue to be addressed first in each reconsideration is whether the restrictions should continue at all. It is suggested that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public that is to say, the people who use taxi services. What benefits or disadvantages arise for them as a result of the continuation of controls; and what benefits or disadvantages would result for the public if the controls were removed? Is there evidence that removal of the controls would result in a deterioration in the amount or quality of taxi service provision?
- 4. In most cases where quantity restrictions are imposed, vehicle licence plates command a premium, often of tens of thousands of pounds. This indicates that there are people who want to enter the taxi market and provide a service to the public, but who are being prevented from doing so by the quantity restrictions. This seems very hard to justify.
- 5. If a local authority does nonetheless take the view that a quantity restriction can be justified in principle, there remains the question of the level at which it should be set, bearing in mind the need to demonstrate that there is no significant unmet demand. This issue is usually addressed by means of a survey; it will be necessary for the local licensing authority to carry out a survey sufficiently frequently to be able to respond to any challenge to the satisfaction of a court. An interval of three years is commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys.
- 6. As to the conduct of the survey, the Department's letter of 16 June 2004 set out a range of considerations. But key points are:

□ the length of time that would-be customers have to wait at ra	nks . However, this
alone is an inadequate indicator of demand; also taken into acco	ount should be

waiting times for street hailings and for telephone bookings. But waiting times at ranks or elsewhere do not in themselves satisfactorily resolve the question of unmet demand. It is also desirable to address
□ latent demand , for example people who have responded to long waiting times by not even trying to travel by taxi. This can be assessed by surveys of people who do not use taxis, perhaps using stated preference survey techniques.
peaked demand. It is sometimes argued that delays associated only with peaks in demand (such as morning and evening rush hours, or pub closing times) are not 'significant' for the purpose of the Transport Act 1985. The Department does not share that view. Since the peaks in demand are by definition the most popular times for consumers to use taxis, it can be strongly argued that unmet demand at these times should not be ignored. Local authorities might wish to consider when the peaks occur and who is being disadvantaged through restrictions on provision of taxis services.
consultation. As well as statistical surveys, assessment of quantity restrictions should include consultation with all those concerned, including user groups (which should include groups representing people with disabilities, and people such as students or women), the police, hoteliers, operators of pubs and clubs and visitor attractions, and providers of other transport modes (such as train operators, who want taxis available to take passengers to and from stations);
publication. All the evidence gathered in a survey should be published, together with an explanation of what conclusions have been drawn from it and why. If quantity restrictions are to be continued, their benefits to consumers and the reason for the particular level at which the number is set should be set out.
☐ financing of surveys . It is not good practice for surveys to be paid for by the local taxi trade (except through general revenues from licence fees). To do so can call in question the impartiality and objectivity of the survey process.
51. Quite apart from the requirement of the 1985 Act, the Department's letter of 16 June 2004 asked all local licensing authorities that operate quantity restrictions to review their policy and

justify it publicly by 31 March 2005 and at least every three years thereafter. The Department also expects the justification for any policy of quantity restrictions to be included in the Local Transport Plan process. A recommended list of questions for local authorities to address when considering quantity controls was attached to the Department's letter. (The questions are listed in Annex A to

this Guidance.)