

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## LICENSING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

28 July 2010

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

#### **PETITION TO COUNCIL – REVIEW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCES**

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#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is the result of a request made through a petition presented to Council on 12 October 2009 for Wirral Borough Council to review supply and demand for hackney carriage vehicle licences and the subsequent meeting of this Committee on 22 March 2010.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 22 March 2010 it was resolved that before a survey is conducted a further report be presented to this Committee to provide details of the costs of a survey and how these costs will be recovered.

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee of the 22 March 2010, considered a petition that was presented to the Council on behalf of 225 hackney carriage licence holders and/or taxi proprietors, which requested that, "Wirral Borough Council urgently review supply and demand of hackney carriage vehicle licences". The Committee resolved the following:
- (1) That in view of the position in respect of the overall hackney carriage licence numbers and the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance the Committee does consider that it is in the interests of the public to undertake a survey of supply and demand.
  - (2) That before a survey is conducted, a further report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee to include details of costs and how those costs will be recovered.
- 2.2 In order to obtain accurate details of the cost of a survey it would be necessary to invite tenders from prospective companies who can undertake this type of work. Information has been obtained from Sefton Council who have recently been through a tender process for such a survey during March 2010.
- 2.3 In response to the tendering process undertaken by Sefton Council bids were received from four companies, the lowest being £20,376 and the highest £30,470. Whilst there are differences in the taxi trade between Wirral and Sefton the range of these bids are likely be indicative of the potential cost of carrying out a survey in Wirral.

- 2.4 A full tendering process can reveal differences in the depth and scope of work that may be carried out by different companies and this can be reflected in the range of costs provided.
- 2.5 A table showing fees that would be payable in respect of hackney carriage driver and vehicle licences based on the costs referred to in paragraph 2.3 assuming the costs are spread over 1, 2 or 3 years, is included at Appendix A.
- 2.6 It is also important to be aware that regular reviews would have to be undertaken if a limit on hackney carriage vehicles was subsequently to be introduced, as the Council would be constantly at risk of appeal against refusal and would have to discharge the burden of proof regarding demand. Therefore an up to date survey would be a pre-requisite of defending any such appeals. The Department for Transport make reference in their Best Practice Guidance that surveys every three years are recommended to justify any policy of quantity restriction
- 2.7 Similarly, defending any appeals to Court has cost implications in respect of Court and legal fees. Such fees can be substantial. Again there is no provision in the budget for these amounts and such amounts would have to be covered by an increase in licence fees.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The cost of the survey would be funded from licensing fees.

### **4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising out of this report.

### **5.0 ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no specific anti-poverty implications arising directly out of this report.

### **6.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no specific social inclusion implications arising directly out of this report.

### **7.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Hackney carriages are an important component in an integrated transport policy.

### **8.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 This report affects the entire Borough.

### **9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are community safety implications arising out of this report.

#### 10.0 **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no planning implications arising out of this report.

#### 11.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 The application form applying for the grant of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence.

#### 12.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the report.

This report was prepared by Margaret O'Donnell who can be contacted on 0151 691 8606.

**Fees payable assuming survey costs of £20,376**

	Current annual fees	Costs spread over 1 year – annual fee payable	Costs spread over 2 years – annual fee payable for 2 years	Costs spread over 3 years – annual fee payable for 3 years
Hackney Carriage Driver Licence	<b>£41.80</b>	<b>£55.75</b>	<b>£49.28</b>	<b>£46.79</b>
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	<b>£160.20</b>	<b>£217.55</b>	<b>£188.88</b>	<b>£179.32</b>

**Fees payable assuming survey costs of £30,470**

	Current annual fees	Costs spread over 1 year – annual fee payable	Costs spread over 2 years – annual fee payable for 2 years	Costs spread over 3 years – annual fee payable for 3 years
Hackney Carriage Driver Licence	<b>£41.80</b>	<b>£62.70</b>	<b>£52.25</b>	<b>£48.77</b>
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	<b>£160.20</b>	<b>£240.30</b>	<b>£200.25</b>	<b>£186.90</b>