

**LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

11th August 2011

VEHICLE INSPECTION FEE STRUCTURE – PETITION AND OBJECTIONS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Juliet Brunner - Community Safety & Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Steve Jorden, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
Wards Affected	All Wards

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Further to item 24 of the minutes of the Licensing Committee's 25th January 2010 meeting, to introduce two vehicle inspections per year. The Committee is asked to consider objections received to the proposed fee structure for vehicle inspections following the publication of the statutory notice as required by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to consider the objections to the fee structure for vehicle inspections and RESOLVE that:**

the Licensing Committee's decision with regards to fees made at its meeting on 25th January 2011 be confirmed, subject to the incorporation of a minor amendment made by Officers, shown within this report at paragraph 3.8.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of re-introducing in house 6 monthly vehicle inspections and testing for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles would be met entirely by revenue received from vehicle inspection fees. Adopting this method would place no financial burden on the Council.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Local Authority has powers under Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to require vehicle inspections on up to three occasions per year.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that the fee income received would result in a break even position for the Council.

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- 3.4 The Legal Services Manager was consulted on the original report and has also been consulted following objections received.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.5 Members may recall the previous decision of the Licensing Committee made on 25th January 2010, which included adopting two vehicle inspection tests a year following a series of very poor spot checks of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fleet.

- 3.6 Due to technical reasons at Crossgates Depot, the implementation of this decision had been delayed for a period of eighteen months.

- 3.7 The actual cost of carrying out the service including any administrative processes was originally proposed and agreed as the following:

Vehicle Inspection	£50.00
Vehicle Inspection re-test	£50.00

- 3.8 Following verbal objections by the taxi drivers, Officers reconsidered these fees and made a slightly amended the re-test fee. These fees, as set out below, were then advertised and consulted upon as required.

Vehicle Inspection Test	£50.00
Vehicle Inspection Re-Test	£25.00

- 3.9 These fees are in line with other Local Authorities within the County and elsewhere and simply reflect the actual cost of this work being undertaken in house. A chart showing garage fees set by neighbouring Local Authorities can be seen at appendix 1.

- 3.10 Appendix 1 also shows current garage charges.

- 3.11 Appendix 3 shows projected income versus costs which would indicate a broadly cost neutral service.

- 3.12 A review of fees and charges and the service will be made following the first 6 months of operation and a report brought back to this Committee, (following the decision made by this Licensing Committee on 25th January 2010).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 Prior to implementation of the new vehicle inspection regime Officers have advertised and consulted with the taxi drivers on the set fees for

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the vehicle inspections as required to do so by Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

- 3.14 There have been several objections to these fees and a breakdown of these objections can be found at appendix 2. The letters of objection are available for inspection in the background papers to this report.
- 3.15 Alongside the letters of objection a petition signed by 177 taxi drivers has been received (total number of taxi drivers licensed by Redditch is currently 400).

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

None

5. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Chart of neighbouring Local Authority garage fees current testing fees.
- Appendix 2 Consultation response table.
- Appendix 3 Projected income and expenditure of vehicle testing regime.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Redditch Taxi Association Petition.
Original letters of objection.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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