



Licensing Committee

20 November 2013

Report Title	Changes to the Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure Process	
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Originating service	Licensing Services	
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Licensing Committee is recommended to:-

- (i) Note the revisions to the process for obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service enhanced criminal records disclosure for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and approve the proposed revised fee structure for enhanced criminal records disclosures as outlined at 2.11 of this report.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Licensing Committee is requested to note the revisions to the process for obtaining an enhanced criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Services for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers.
- 1.2 The Licensing Committee is requested to consider the recommendation to approve the proposed revised fee structure for enhanced criminal record disclosures for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).
- 2.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 gives the Council powers not to grant a licence to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle unless they are satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle driver's licence.
- 2.3 The licensing authority is empowered in law to check with the Disclosure and Barring Service for the existence and content of any criminal record held in the name of an applicant.
- 2.4 The cost of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check is determined by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- 2.5 The DBS has indicated that there is no proposal to increase the fee at this time. However, if the fee is increased this will automatically be passed onto drivers.
- 2.6 The fee currently charged for a DBS disclosure is £50 which includes administration costs.
- 2.7 The charge for administration was initially set at £14 and the cost of a written disclosure was £36 with an overall cost to the applicant of £50.
- 2.8 Over the years the CRB (now DBS) has increased the cost of an enhanced disclosure however the Licensing Authority has not increased the charge for administration.
- 2.9 In 2012 the DBS launched an online disclosure application process in addition to the existing paper process. This online process significantly streamlines the application process for all parties.
- 2.10 Although Licensing Services encourages applicants to apply online there is still a high percentage of applicants who opt for the paper application.

2.11 In order to encourage more applicants to apply online it is proposed the following fees should be charged:-

- (a) An online DBS application submitted by the applicant and verified by a Licensing Officer at a cost of £46.
- (b) Completion and verification of a DBS online application by a Licensing Officer at a cost of £65.

2.12 If the applicant applies online prior to attending Licensing Services to produce original ID documentation this will greatly reduce the administrative time to process and verify the DBS application thus allowing for enhanced customer service through better working practices and use of resources.

2.13 For applicants who do not have access to apply online the Council offers support as there is access to computers on the ground floor of the Civic Centre. Employees have confirmed with ICT that these machines have the appropriate security safeguards in place.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 The proposed fees will cover the increased costs of providing additional support to drivers who cannot or do not have access to a computer. This is not expected to have a detrimental impact on the Council's finances but the related income performance will be monitored accordingly in the short to medium term. [RT/06112013/W]

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 The legal implications are considered within the main body of the report [RM/05112013/M]

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 This report has no implications for the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 Schedule of background papers

6.1 Hackney carriage and private hire fees and charges annual report.

Licensing Committee 16 January 2013.