



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

TAXI LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE 23 April 2008

Report of the Director of Environmental Services

TAXI LICENSING SECTION – ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To endorse the conversion of the temporary (0.4FTE) Licensing Officer post to a permanent 0.4FTE post; to be funded from licensing income.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 In September 2004, members considered a report on workload and staffing requirements within the Taxi Licensing Section. The report detailed the increased workload within the section resulting from:
- the introduction of the CRB system
 - increased levels of driver and vehicle application
 - increased demand for knowledge tests
 - more case referrals to the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee
 - changes to meter test procedures
 - increased demand for partnership working, particularly on enforcement
 - greater numbers of service requests from the trade and public
- 2.2 The report recommended the creation of an additional part time Licensing Officer post (0.6 FTE) to help to meet the service demands. It was envisaged that this permanent post would replace the full time temporary staff that had been employed for the previous 12 months. The report also highlighted officers' concerns that the 0.6 FTE post may not be sufficient to meet the workload demands, and that the situation would be kept under review.
- 2.3 The additional part time post was approved by Committee. This gave a staffing compliment of 6.6 FTE within the Taxi Licensing Section (a Principal Licensing Officer, two Enforcement Officers, a Senior Licensing Officer, 2.6 Licensing Officers). The 0.6 FTE post worked Mondays to Wednesday each week.
- 2.4 During 2005, the workload within the section continued to increase. As part of the 'Review of Taxi Licensing', the section also implemented its revised opening hours following consultation with the trade. This meant ending the limited appointment system in favour of longer standard opening hours and doubling the reception capacity. The increased demand meant that temporary staff were again required to maintain the service and prevent a build up of 'back office' work.
- 2.5 In an effort to minimise costs, the use of temporary staff ceased in March 2006. This resulted in a backlog of administrative work and considerable difficulties in providing office cover on Thursdays and Fridays, particularly during periods of

sickness absence or holiday. Absence of cover then resulted in delays in seeing customers, longer queues, staff being unable to take breaks, and occasional closure of the reception.

- 2.6 Members therefore agreed in October 2006 that an additional part time Licensing Officer would be employed to work two days per week, on Thursdays and Fridays. This post was to be offered on a temporary contract until March 2008, by which time all the administrative charges within the Section would be completed and it would be easier to assess the longer term requirements for the section. It was agreed that this extra 0.4 FTE (making a total of three full time Licensing Officers) should be funded from the trading surplus from 2005/6 rather than from future licence fees, thereby minimising the impact upon the taxi trade. In addition, members agreed that the Director of Environmental Services should report back to this Committee regarding the workload and staffing situation within the taxi licensing section.
- 2.7 Since October 2006, the workload of the section has continued to increase, with significant growth being noted in the numbers of some types of licence. In addition, the Government's removal of the 'contract exemption' legislation for former 'chauffeur' and 'executive' cars, has resulted in a considerable amount of extra licensing activity (i.e. to implement Members' decision to license the operators, drivers and vehicles themselves under the private hire licensing regime). Another source of additional work has been the recent decision by Committee to follow Government guidance regarding the licensing of stretched limousines, which suggests that they should be considered for licensing as specialised private hire vehicles.
- 2.8 Other forthcoming policy-related issues which may also generate additional work are the potential licensing of rickshaws, tuk-tuks and similar vehicles.
- 2.9. It is considered that all of the above activities will result in an increased workload for the foreseeable future, requiring the retention of the 0.4FTE Licensing Officer post. Considering the increase in the number of licences issued since 2006, the ongoing funding for this post is proposed to be sourced from licensing income.

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Background papers:	None
List of Appendices:	Appendix 1 Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The ongoing cost of this appointment is proposed to be met from the Taxi Licensing budget.

Legal

2. None

Personnel

3. See report.

Equalities impact

4. The Taxi Licensing Service aims to provide a high quality service to all members of the taxi trade and the public at all times.

Corporate priorities

5. The proposal supports the corporate priority of **giving excellent services and value for money**.