

-----Original Message-----

From: Andy Kay [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 March 2011 06:14
To: Stoker, Elaine; Cullinan, Mark; licensing; Humphreys, Alan
Cc: Donna Short; Johnson, Anthony; Mark Booth; Pete Townend; Peter Hobart
Subject: Ludicrous Increase in License Fees

Hi All

Can I start this message by explaining that despite a request to the contrary this email is copied to the Chief Executive because I have failed on two separate occasions with a request for detailed accounts of the licensing function. These "Freedom of Information" requests were sent to the Director of Finance and at the time of writing I am still not in receipt of a reply. I need this information so that I may do the calculations to establish whether or not the fees we are currently being charged are reasonable let alone the proposed increase.

I will have to make representations to the District Auditor to seek clarification if no answer is forthcoming.

The current CPI (Consumer Price Index) is running at 4%. Licensing has requested an increase of 2 1/2 times this at 10%. I wish to formally raise an objection to this increase on behalf of the Association.

Given the demands for reductions in Local Government Spending by this government the increase requested would seem to totally ignore the direction provided by Parliament.

The information provided to the committee was that the increase was required to safeguard jobs within Licensing. My observation is that there has been a huge increase in administration within Licensing and I can only guess this is designed to justify the over staffing of the department. As a result of changes to the way vehicles display plates the department now has what is referred to "plate making day" every week (Thursdays) which would not have been necessary if we were not thawing away plates every 6 months.

There has been no attempt by Licensing to mitigate the increase in fees by reducing unnecessary over administration. I have already suggested cost cutting measures such as reverting to 3 year badges in accordance with Government best practice guidelines. This would save the issuing of approximately 2000 badges every 3 years. I am certain this would save considerably more than will be raised through the proposed increase in fees.

Now onto more interesting things. I would like to bring to the attention of all a very pertinent and well written article in the latest copy of Private Hire Monthly. This reports on the recent situation with regard to Licensing Fees in Guildford. I would suggest that the article should be read at your earliest convenience. It wasn't merely the fact that Guildford had failed in it's duty to properly advertise their fee increase but also clarified the legality of what can be charged for! It sets out clearly that the enforcement costs are costs that cannot be added on to the licence fees!

A final thought to finish with. How many other jobs in the town Hall will be "ring fenced" as are the jobs in Licensing? We in the Taxi and Private Hire trade are really struggling to make ends meet a fact that has clearly been overlooked when proposing the fee increase.

Kind regards

Andy Kay
Chairman
Lancaster City Hackney Proprietors Association