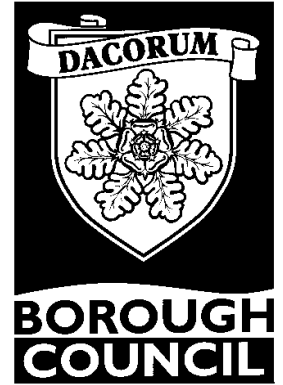


AGENDA ITEM: 6

SUMMARY



Report for:	Licensing Health & Safety Enforcement Sub-Committee
Date of meeting:	Tuesday 28th August 2012
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	CHANGES TO CRB FEES AND PROCEDURES
Contact:	Ross Hill – Licensing Team Leader, Legal Governance
Purpose of report:	To advise of an increase to CRB disclosure fees, and of changes to identity validation procedures
Recommendations	That the fees charged by the Council in respect of CRB disclosures for hackney carriage and private hire drivers are adjusted in line with external fee increases to ensure full cost recovery
Corporate objectives:	Dacorum Delivers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adjusting the CRB fees charged will ensure full cost recovery on this administrative element.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> The Council is currently making a small loss on every hackney carriage and private hire driver's CRB disclosure. Adopting the recommendations will ensure full cost recovery. <u>Value for Money</u> As 'Financial'
Risk Implications	Not applicable
Equalities Implications	Not applicable
Health And Safety Implications	Not applicable

Consultees:	As this relates to a recharge of fees levied by an external agency, consultation is not considered necessary.
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CRB: Criminal Records Bureau

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Every individual who applies to Dacorum Borough Council for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence is required to obtain an enhanced criminal records disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), prior to the grant of a licence. The council, which has registered body status with the CRB, arranges for these checks to be carried out at the same time as an application for a licence is received.
- 1.2. This check is considered to be a vital part of the council's obligation to ensure that applicants for driver licences are 'fit and proper persons'.
- 1.3. Taxi drivers (encompassing both hackney carriage and private hire) were specified in legislation as a profession exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 with effect from the 26th March 2012, allowing the council to take into account offences which would ordinarily be considered 'spent' and disregarded. From that date, the council was entitled to request enhanced level disclosures for drivers.
- 1.4. A fee is charged to the council by the CRB for every disclosure check carried out. This fee is then recharged to applicants, payable at the time of application. The amount recharged to applicants is currently set at £36.00.

2. FEE INCREASE

- 2.1. The CRB increased the fee charged for an enhanced disclosure on the 6th April 2011, to £44.00, to reflect increased costs of delivering the service after the Government's 'Vetting and Barring Scheme' was scaled back.
- 2.2. At that time, as taxi driver was not specified as an exempt profession, the council was requesting standard level disclosures. These are subject to a fee of £26.00, which was not increased in 2011.
- 2.3. When the council recommenced requesting enhanced level disclosures in March 2012, it was not appreciated that there had been an increase to the fee, and the previous fee was utilised. As a result, the council is currently incurring an £8.00 loss on every disclosure it requests for driver licence applicants, which is currently being absorbed from licence application fees.
- 2.4. It is therefore proposed that the fees charged to applicants for a CRB disclosure are raised to £44.00, with effect from the 1st September 2012, to ensure full cost recovery. It is further proposed that any future increases or decreases to the fee charged by the CRB are reflected automatically in the fee charged by the council, without need for further Committee resolutions.

3. CHANGES TO IDENTITY VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

- 3.1. The CRB have also advised of changes to their identity verification procedures, which must be followed by all registered bodies when requesting disclosures, to take effect from the 1st September 2012.
- 3.2. Currently, applicants for disclosures are required to present several pieces of identification from a prescribed list, which includes official documents such as driving licences or passports, and other documents such as financial statements, letters from official bodies, or utility bills.
- 3.3. Under the new procedures, registered bodies will now be required to verify the identity of a person who is to be the subject of a disclosure using one of three 'routes':
 - 3.3.1. Route 1 requires the checking of a prescribed piece of current, government-issued identification: either a photographic UK driving licence, a passport, a UK biometric residence permit, or an original UK birth certificate, as issued at the time of birth. Two further documents must also be produced from an approved list. It is believed that the vast majority of applicants for driver licences will be able to satisfy the requirements of this route.
 - 3.3.2. If an applicant is unable to produce a suitable form of official photographic ID, they must then be verified under route 2. In addition to the production of three pieces of identification from an approved list, the applicant must also pass an external identity validation check, through a company that complies with the Government's Level 2 (remote) identity verification standards.
 - 3.3.3. If neither route 1 or 2 are successful, route 3 requires production of a combination of five documents from an approved list. Where none of these routes can be utilised, the applicant will be required to undergo fingerprinting to allow further checks to be carried out.
- 3.4. Officers are currently investigating options for the route 2 identity check, which will incur a further fee (likely to be less than £10.00). It is proposed that the cost of this is borne by the applicant, in the same way that CRB fees are. The changes are likely to affect a single-digit number of applicants.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. That the fees charged by the Council in respect of CRB enhanced disclosures for hackney carriage and private hire drivers are raised to £44.00, with effect from the 1st September 2012;
- 4.2. That the fee charged by an external identity verification company in respect of a CRB Route 2 identity check, for those applicants affected by those provisions, shall be recharged in full to the applicant;
- 4.3. That any future changes to the fees charged by the CRB for disclosures, or the fees charged by an external identity verification company for route 2 identity checks, shall be reflected automatically in the fees charged by the Council for such, on a full cost recovery basis, without further resolution.