

STAFFING AND SERVICE COSTS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members to consider, in principle, the level of staffing, service delivery and cost of the Hackney Carriage Office.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Since the Council recovered the Taxi Licensing function from Southend on Sea Borough Council it has been a 'stand-alone' service with only minor integration with other Revenue and Housing Management functions. Although there are some merits in "specialism" it has caused problems in maintaining the appropriate level of service during times of annual leave and sickness. Just of late this has been a pressing issue with the long-term sickness absence of the Hackney Carriage Officer.
- 2.2 Members have also indicated that there is a need to return to delivering a 'cost neutral' service as, at present, the taxpayers provide a subsidy of around £18,300. (2002/03 Estimate).
- 2.3 Additionally, Members have expressed their concerns at the lack of enforcement work undertaken in this important public safety arena.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The existing Hackney Carriage Officer leaves the Council's employ on 30 August 2002 and this gives some scope to restructure the Transportation and Revenue Administration Section.
- 3.2 The Revenue and Housing Management Division is the largest of the Council's service delivery teams and currently comprises 85 personnel divided between four teams covering the following functional areas:-

Housing Management
Benefit Administration
Local Taxation
Transportation and Revenue Administration (TARA)

3.3 TARA look after a mix of functions which includes:-

Taxi Licensing)	
Car Park Administration)	Transport related functions
Community Transport)	
System Administration)	
Cashiers)	Administrative function
Concessions)	

3.4 The opportunity now presented to Members is to create a team to deal with the generic transport related functions outlined above and to plan the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in the District which is due to be introduced in October 2004.

3.5 The remaining administrative functions undertaken by TARA section will be incorporated into the Revenue related functions.

3.6 If Members are so minded they could instruct the Head of Service to draft a report for consideration by Policy and Finance Committee on 10 September 2002.

3.7 The report would need to include the following elements:-

- delivery of a 'cost neutral' Hackney Carriage Licensing function.
- adequate staffing levels to cover
 - (a) all administrative functions
 - (b) an agreed level of enforcement
- integration with other transport related functions.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Members to instruct the Head of Service to draft a report for Policy and Finance Committee on 10 September concerning the elements outlined in this report.

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Background Papers:

None

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