

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
31 January 2008

OUTSOURCING OF TAXI TESTING
(Director of Environment and Leisure)

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The Committee received a report at its meeting on 4 October 2007 advising members of proposals to outsource the inspection of licensed vehicles for mechanical and general condition requirements.
- 1.2 It has since been confirmed by Transport Management within the Council that testing of licensed vehicles by staff at the Depot will cease on 28 February 2008. It is therefore essential that new arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transfer whilst still retaining the present high standards of inspection.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to advise members on the progress made and to seek approval for the recommendations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee agrees to:

- (a) **note the progress made to outsource the testing of taxis and**
- (b) **delegates authority to the Chairman to agree with officers those sites that will be appointed to deliver testing on behalf of the Council.**

3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 3.2 There are no significant implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Impact Assessment

- 3.3 There are no direct consequences of this report for any group and no direct community safety implications.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 3.4 There are no issues to consider.

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council has used suitably qualified staff at the Depot to carry out an independent inspection of the mechanical and general exterior and interior condition of licensed vehicles for at least 20 years. This inspection covers many of those matters dealt within an MOT, but also includes matters outside of that test which are relevant to the safe and comfortable use of a licensed vehicle.
- 4.2 As the Depot is not a registered MOT station, it has therefore been necessary for licensed vehicles to have 2 tests: the MOT and the Council test. At times the licensed trade have argued that this is unnecessary, bureaucratic and expensive for them. Consideration had been given to obtaining MOT status for the Depot, but this was rejected as a way forward.
- 4.3 It was therefore decided that as an essential requirement any new arrangement should deliver the MOT and Council test at a single visit and at a competitive price. A letter was sent to 13 MOT stations within or on the borders of the Borough inviting expressions of interest. 9 expressions of interest were returned and a further letter, together with a questionnaire, was sent to those businesses. A total of 6 questionnaires have subsequently been returned.
- 4.4 Visits have been made to all the applicants to assess the premises and facilities. Where new vehicles have been submitted for licensing, attempts have been made to have those vehicles tested by those garages responding to the questionnaire. This has had two primary aims: to educate the service provider on the tests required and for the Council to examine the process from booking to completion at each of the premises.
- 4.5 Some of the larger private hire vehicles such as stretched limousines and some of the more specialist hackney carriages have long wheelbases and therefore not all garages have the facilities to test these vehicles. It is essential that at least one garage able to test these longer vehicles is approved.
- 4.6 An update on progress will be given to members on the night.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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