

Report to: ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

Date: 6th February 2007

Report of: ALAN EASTWOOD
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Report No:

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Report Title: TAXI SCRUTINY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS – UPDATE

Purpose of the report: To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of implementing the recommendations of the Taxi Scrutiny Panel

Decision: The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to comment on the report.

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 On 10th October the Scrutiny Committee received a report, which outlined the findings of the Taxi Scrutiny Panel and the response of the Executive Member for Environmental Services.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny resolved to note the report and be kept informed of progress with implementation of the recommendations.
- 1.3 This report provides an update of progress.

2.0 DELIVERY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The table below lists the accepted recommendations of the Taxi Scrutiny Panel and the progress made to date on implementing each recommendation.

| Accepted recommendations | Suggested timescale for completion | Comment on progress |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Agree to the principle of multiple providers of taxi testing (including the Council testing facility and a number of private sector groups) to alleviate potential increase in waiting times brought about by changes to rules around tests. | Agreed at Executive Member (Environmental Services) decision meeting on 26 September 2006. | |
| 2. Instruct officers to undertake a thorough investigation of the issues detailed prior to any outsourcing [the issues are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>capacity</u> – ability of garages to deal with the volume of tests • <u>impartiality</u> of garages undertaking the test • <u>consistency</u> of tests • <u>tendering</u> – the mechanism that should be used to select suppliers • <u>monitoring</u> – a mechanism to monitor the performance of the contractors against a contract would need to be developed and introduced. | 4 months (from October 06) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft report being prepared for Executive Member (Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Finance), for decision in March 2007. • The report identifies a number of key areas for further development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the setting of a detailed specification for minimum vehicle standards; (b) developing a contract document/agreement between the Licensing Unit and any provider of vehicle testing facilities; (c) establishing minimum criteria for providers e.g. VOSA accredited testing stations etc; (d) identifying and recovering costs associated with implementing the outsourcing regime; (e) developing documentation and processing mechanisms (f) agreeing a mechanism for the invitation of expressions of interest; (h) determining how providers will become approved. |

| Accepted recommendations | Suggested timescale for completion | Comment on progress |
|---|---|--|
| <p>3. Agree to a thorough review of the bodywork standards applied under the current taxi testing regime with a view to striking a more appropriate balance between safety and appearance. The review to include the taxi consultative panel, vehicle testers and the bodywork repair trade.</p> | <p>4 months (from October 2006)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report consideration by Taxi Consultative Panel on 29th November, but deferred pending further consideration. • Report originally intended for consideration by Licensing and Regulation Committee (LERC) on 30th January 2007, but now to be considered by Taxi Consultative Panel on 14th February 2007, and thereafter LERC. • Bodywork standards need to be agreed before any outsourcing of vehicle tests. |
| <p>4. Undertake an assessment of the value of undertaking six monthly tests on vehicles less than 3 years old (the Executive Member agreed that the issue of an annual test on vehicles less than 12 months old and a 6 monthly test on vehicles more than 12 months old be explored as a possible amendment to this recommendation).</p> | <p>2 months (from October 2006)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment undertaken and report considered by Taxi Consultative Panel on 29th November 2006. • Report to LERC on 12th December 2006 who resolved: “ that the current licensing procedures and conditions be amended, to require a vehicle less than three years of age to pass a vehicle examination once a year before the issue of an annual vehicle licence and that any vehicle which travels 50.000 miles per annum to have a bi-annual test”. • The new procedure is yet to be implemented. It is suggested that implementation should coincide with the introduction of any new testing arrangements, as in 2 above, or by April 2007, whichever is soonest. |
| <p>5. The Executive Member for Environmental Services be requested to examine the issue of the opening times at Minerva House (Licensing Office). The Executive Member has subsequently agreed to the issue of an appointments procedure for vehicle owners to be examined.</p> | <p>2 months (from October 2006)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports taken to Taxi Consultative Panel on 8th and 29th November. Agreement could not be reached between the trades. Decision to defer pending further consideration of the proposals. • Further report drafted to be considered by the Taxi Consultative Panel on 14th February 2007 and by the Executive Member (Corporate Strategy and Finance) in March 2007. • The report considers various options to improve the delivery of service, including opening times, together with staffing arrangements |

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| | | and the increased costs associated with longer opening hours. |
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3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Non-specific financial and cost implications of implementing each of the agreed recommendations are identified in the table at paragraph 2.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to comment on the report.