

CABINET MEMBERS DELEGATED DECISION

Open		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO
Lead Member: Cllr Adrian Lawrence E-mail: cldr.adrian.lawrence@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Brian Long		
		Other Members consulted: Cllr Don Tyler		
Lead Officer: Vicki Hopps E-mail: vicki.hopps@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616307		Other Officers consulted: John Gilbraith, Marie Malt, Emma Duncan		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/ Pre-screening	Risk Management Implications NO
Date meeting advertised: 17 th January 2017		Date of meeting decision to be taken: 24 th January 2017		
Deadline for Call-In: 31 st January 2017				

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT – APPROVED TESTING STATIONS FOR PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

Summary

The Council currently has 4 approved testing stations to carry out mandatory checks on private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. At present there is no formal agreement between the Council and these testing stations on the standards required and expected.

Recommendation

It is recommended a service level agreement and application form is adopted for all approved testing stations.

Reason for Decision

The testing stations are acting as 'agents' of the Council and adoption of a formal service level agreement ensures consistency and transparency of enforcement of the taxi licensing conditions across the borough and sets out the standards expected from approved testing stations.

Background

The current list of approved testing stations (garages) evolved over time to the point at which there are now four approved testing stations within the Borough. There is currently a waiting list of four premises wishing to become a testing station.

As the approved testing stations are effectively acting as 'agents' for the Council then it is vital that they operate to consistent standards so that the licensed trade has confidence in the service they receive from the testing stations.

At present there is an informal arrangement between the Council and approved testing stations regarding standards of service provision.

The service level agreement (SLA) proposes to formalise the arrangement between the Council and testing stations and to provide clarity regarding the standards expected. Any garage wishing to be an approved testing station will have to complete an application form and demonstrate that it meets a minimum standard. In order to ensure fairness and transparency of selection there will be scoring matrix used to assess each application.

That the SLA will set out minimum standards and assist the Council in following up concerns with testing stations where standards are lacking. This formal agreement will offer transparency and consistency for the licensed trade as to what they can expect of an approved testing station.

In order to ensure consistency between testing stations, it is proposed to limit the numbers of garages that are approved. By having unlimited numbers will place undue burdens on the Licensing Service through inspections and enquires and the cost will ultimately have to be recovered from the licensed trade.

All hackney carriage and private hire drivers were sent questionnaires regarding the current arrangements for approved testing stations.

In response to a question asking whether they thought if there were enough testing stations currently, 64% of those that responded said 'Yes'.

When asked whether the Council should approve testing stations relative to the location of the majority of vehicle proprietors 55% said 'No'

As the current number of approved stations is 4 it is proposed to increase this to a maximum of 7 (depending on the number and quality of applications).

Options Considered

1. To carry on without a service level agreement in place
2. To introduce a service level agreement and invite all current testing stations and those on the waiting list apply.

3. To introduce a service level agreement and invite all current testing stations and advertise so any other garage within the borough may apply but to limit the number of approved stations to 7.

Policy Implications - None

Financial Implications – None

Personnel Implications - None

Statutory Considerations – None

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

Risk Management Implications – None

Signed:

Cabinet Member for:.....

Date:.....



**Pre-Screening Equality Impact
 Assessment**

Name of policy/service/function	Licensing
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	New / Existing (delete as appropriate)
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	To provide consistency in application of the taxi licensing conditions by approved testing stations Policy is not constrained by statutory obligations.

Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			x	
	Disability			x	
	Gender			x	
	Gender Re-assignment			x	
	Marriage/civil partnership			x	
	Pregnancy & maternity			x	
	Race			x	
	Religion or belief			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
	Other (eg low income)			x	

Question	Answer	Comments
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	Yes / No	
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes / No	
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes / No	
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	Actions:
		Actions agreed by EWG member:

Assessment completed by: Name Vicki Hopps	
Job title Environmental Health Manager	Date 12/01/17

