

**REPORT TO:** Licensing Sub-Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 12 June 2014

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Age of Taxi Vehicles

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise the Sub-Committee of the outcome of discussions with Transportation on the practicalities surrounding the proposals for 6 monthly “walk round” tests of older vehicles following the decision of the Sub-Committee on 13.2.14.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee-
- (i) Note that Transportation are of the view that the proposed “walk round” test is unworkable and that full tests would be required.
  - (ii) Authorise the Manager, Licensing, Administration & Democratic Services and such officers as she may appoint to implement a further public consultation exercise with a view to determining alternative arrangements in respect of a testing regime for older vehicles.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At their meeting on 14.11.13, the Sub-Committee agreed to public consultation on proposals to remove Condition 9 of the standard conditions of a taxi licence, which would have the effect of removing the age-limit which prevented taxis more than six years old (or twelve for custom-made vehicles) from being submitted for renewal of licence.
- 3.2 Said consultation was open throughout the latter part of November, December and January, and closed on 29 January 2014. A total of 13 responses were received, and were submitted to the Sub-Committee at the meeting on 13.2.14.

- 3.3 Following consideration of the responses received, the Sub-Committee agreed to implement the proposed change of conditions, on the basis that affected vehicles would be subject to an additional “walk-around” examination six months after the usual full annual test, said walk-around test to be accompanied by a fresh MOT obtained by the applicant.
- 3.4 The Sub-Committee requested a further report outlining the practicalities of the proposed examination procedures. The Licensing team have been in discussion with Transportation since that time.
- 3.5 It has become apparent from the information provided that Transportation are of the view that the proposal to have an annual test followed six months later by the proposed “walk-around”, presumed to be a less-involved and cheaper examination, is unworkable. The advice from Transportation is to the effect that, as the whole purpose of the examination is to confirm that the older vehicles involved are safe and reliable, any examination carried out on the vehicle must be the full test which is carried out annually at present.
- 3.6 Transportation were also of the view that this would have the additional benefits of removing any dubiety on the part of both VPMU staff and the trade as to exactly what sort of test was being carried out and what these would consist of.
- 3.7 As a result of this view, the decision taken by the Sub-Committee on 13.2.14 is unenforceable. The options moving forward, assuming that the decision to remove the age-limit is to be upheld, would appear to be either to proceed on the basis that the older vehicles are only tested on an annual basis, in the same way as newer vehicles, or that the older vehicles undergo the full examination at VPMU every six months, at the full cost on each occasion.
- 3.8 It is proposed that a further consultation is now held with a view to determining the appropriate way forward in the light of Transportation’s position regarding the decision taken on 13.2.14.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None. As Licensing Authority, the Council may impose or amend conditions of licence as deemed necessary subject to appropriate consultation.

#### **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – Increased frequency of vehicle testing will result in increased costs- licence fee levels will require to be reviewed to ensure that such costs continue to be covered by the level of fees imposed.
- 6.2 Personnel - increased frequency of vehicle testing will have an impact on resources within VPMU in terms of carrying out the additional tests and also within Licensing admin in terms of increased administration required as a result.
- 6.3 Other – None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Reports to the Licensing Sub-Committee dated 14.11.13 & 13.2.14

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