

REPORT TO: Licensing Sub-Committee

MEETING DATE: 8 January 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Age of Taxi Vehicles

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Sub-Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on the issue of the testing of older taxi vehicles, following on from the decision of the Sub-Committee on 12/6/14.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee-
- (i) Note the outcome of the consultation narrated at paragraph 3.3 below.
 - (ii) Agree that taxi vehicles which are over 6 years of age (or 12 years in the case of custom-built vehicles) be required to undergo full inspections every six months.
 - (iii) Authorise the Manager, Licensing, Administration & Democratic Services and such officers as she may appoint to process any necessary amendments to licence conditions and guidance material to take account of paragraph (ii) above.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following a consultation process regarding the proposal to remove condition 9 of the conditions of taxi licence, which condition prevented older taxi vehicles from being accepted for renewal of licence due to age, and consideration of the responses received, the Sub-Committee agreed at their meeting on 13/2/14 to implement the proposal to remove this condition, 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.

- 3.2 The Sub-Committee requested a further report outlining the practicalities of the proposed examination procedures. That further report was submitted to the meeting on 12/6/14. The report made clear that Transportation were of the view that the proposal outlined in paragraph 3.1 above was unworkable and that vehicles should have full tests, which are currently carried out annually. This would have the added benefit of making clear to all parties exactly what would be required and what examinations would consist of.
- 3.3 As a result of this advice, the Sub-Committee agreed to have a further public consultation on the question of whether older taxi vehicles should be treated differently to newer ones as regards the frequency of testing. That consultation ran from 1 October to 15 November. I would advise that no responses were received to the consultation. It is therefore open to the Sub-Committee to decide on how to proceed.
- 3.4 The view appears to be clear that there should be no age-based restriction on vehicles being renewed for licence. The choice as regards testing of such vehicles (to be clear, these are vehicles over 6 years old, or 12 years for custom-built vehicles) is a straightforward one. Either such vehicles continue to be tested annually in the same way as newer vehicles are at present, or, they are subject to a second full test each year, testing being increased to 6-monthly for such vehicles.
- 3.5 The former is obviously the simplest option. The latter has cost implications for the trade and staffing and resource implications for VPMU. Given that the entire point behind treating older vehicles differently from newer ones was the issue of public safety, it is considered appropriate for the testing on a six-monthly basis to be adopted.

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 & 12.6.14

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