

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services

Licensing Committee – 6 March 2013

Subject: Proposed amendments to Taxi Testing Regime

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To amend the frequency of inspection required by vehicles operating as taxis or private hire cars within West Dunbartonshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the proposed changes to the testing regime for taxi and private hire cars as described in Appendix 1 be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1** The subject of frequency of testing was raised by the Clydebank Public Hire Association at a meeting attended by Graham Pollock, Manager of Regulatory Services, Robert Mackie, Senior Officer (Licensing Services) and James McArthur, Licensing Officer in May 2012.
- 3.2** Graham Pollock, Manager of Regulatory Services, agreed to investigate this issue and requested that the Licensing Team carry out a benchmarking exercise to compare the frequency of vehicle inspection required by neighbouring authorities which are detailed within the appendix.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The primary purpose of a testing regime for taxis and private hire cars is to ensure that vehicles licensed by West Dunbartonshire Council are safe, roadworthy and comfortable for the public to travel in.
- 4.2** At present, taxis and private hire vehicles are tested at the Council's MOT station at a frequency based entirely on the age of the vehicle. However the safety of a vehicle depends on a number of factors, not just the vehicle's age, such as how well the vehicle is maintained. The proposed testing regime is designed to give operators an incentive to maintain their vehicle properly by reducing the inspection frequency for vehicles that have no major defects during a test. Conversely, the inspection frequency will increase if major defects are found.
- 4.3** The proposed changes to the frequency of testing which have been identified as requiring alteration have been highlighted in Appendix 1.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no personnel issues.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The changes to the frequency of inspection will result in a reduction in the income generated by the Councils' MOT station.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 Having carried out an EIA screening test there will be no impact on any protected group in terms of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. A full impact assessment was not required.

9. Consultation

9.1 Rodney Thornton, Fleet and Waste Services Manager, was contacted to discuss the implications of a reduced number of taxis being tested at the Council's MOT station if changes to the frequency of inspection were to be implemented and fully supports the proposed changes.

9.2 Robert Mackie, Senior Officer (Licensing Services) met with John Blake, Fleet Officer and David Leitch, Workshop Foreman to discuss the elements of the vehicle inspection which, in the event of a vehicle failing an inspection, should determine the future frequency of inspection of a particular vehicle.

9.3 West Dunbartonshire Council's Fleet & Waste Services Department were consulted and consider that the proposed changes to the testing regime will not result in a reduction in the protection and safety of taxi/private hire car customers or other road users.

9.4 The taxi trade associations were contacted in November 2012 and invited to comment on the initial proposal to reduce the frequency of vehicle testing based on the condition of the vehicle when presented for testing. No objections or representations were forthcoming.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 Improve economic growth and employability: The proposed scheme reduces the financial burdens on taxi and private hire operators if they ensure their vehicle is presented at the MOT station in a satisfactory condition.

Improve the wellbeing of communities and protect the welfare of vulnerable people: The changes will not result in any increased risk to the travelling public.



Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services

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Person to Contact: Robert Mackie,
Senior Officer (Licensing Services),
Licensing Team,
Rosebery Place,
Clydebank,
G81 1TG.

Tel. No. (Direct line) 01389 738742.
robert.mackie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Taxi/Private Hire Car Testing Regime

Background Papers: Equality Impact Assessment Screening Report 21/2/2013

Wards Affected: N/A.