



Responses to Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Report to Overview Committee

Title of the review: Hackney Carriage Licensing Scrutiny Review	
Date review completed: 14 May 2013	Date presented to Cabinet: 8 August 2013
Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Payne	Response due to the Overview Committee (28 days): 7 October 2013
Chair of the review group: Councillor M Paling	
Officer supporting the review: Jane Ansell	

Guidance

The final report and recommendations from the above review have been considered by Cabinet and a written response to the recommendations from the responsible Cabinet Member to the Overview Committee is required within twenty eight days of the date the review was presented to Cabinet.

If you need any further assistance in completing this response please contact the Officer that supported the review

Recommendation 1 (of 7)

That the planned benchmarking exercise and further standardisation of Gedling Borough Council's Licensing Policy against those of neighbouring authorities is progressed in consultation with the Licensing Committee as stated in the officer responses at **appendix 1**.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly accepted Do not accept

The service is committed to standardisation of processes, fees and policies. Work to achieve this in Nottinghamshire is led through the Notts' Authorities Licensing Group (NALG), Gedling is an active member of this group, policies have previously been developed together and further work will be carried out and reported on.

Recommendation 2 (of 7)

That subject to rigorous Equalities Impact Assessment the Council and Environment and Licensing Team progress the implementation of a topography test as part of the taxi licensing process with immediate effect.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date
 (Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

I fully accept that the introduction of a topography test for licensees will make a positive contribution to the quality of the service and help ensure public safety; this approach is consistent with surrounding authorities. I intend to pursue the introduction of the test through the budget discussions this year, for introduction in 2014/15.

Recommendation 3 (of 7)

That the Council and Licensing Team seek to encourage and promote amongst fleet operators the introduction of an NVQ for taxi drivers, to incorporate customer care and communication skills, health and safety and awareness when assisting people with disabilities.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date
 (Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The service will publicise and encourage the adoption of the NVQ. This will be done in the service's new newsletter, on the website, correspondence etc. It should be noted that there are a limited number of providers of the course in the market place and this will be kept under review.

Recommendation 4 (of 7)

That the Environment and Licensing Team seeks to include taxi fleets in the DEFRA Transport Plan as part of the 'Eco Stars' initiative, giving consideration to the use of the 'fleet age' procedures as an opportunity to influence fleet operators to participate in the scheme.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The ECOSTARS scheme pioneered with DEFRA funding has now rolled out to cover the conurbation. Brendan Cox from the Public Protection Service will look to drive this forward with agreement from the other authorities to ensure consistency.

Recommendation 5 (of 7)

That a cost comparison exercise on the licensing fees is carried out with those of other authorities, to establish whether this is a contributing factor to the increased demand experienced at Gedling Borough Council.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

Please see my answer to recommendation 1. The service is currently involved in a fee setting exercise for 2014/15 where the cost basis for the fees is being compared.

Recommendation 6 (of 7)

That the September 2013 Environment and Licencing Committee takes the opportunity to reflect upon and review the level of positive impact of the new application process and improved forms and guidance.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

The forms, processes, fees and procedures are constantly under review. There is considerable work being undertaken currently to prepare for 2014/15, particularly for the possible introduction of the topography test and the transfer of roles from service support to customer services. Given all this change and potential change it may be more appropriate that this is done in the early part of the next financial year.

Recommendation 7 (of 7)

That all of the above measures form a 5 year improvement plan which is assessed at an appropriate point in the future and reported to the Overview Scrutiny Committee.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member to Overview Date

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted Partly Accepted Do not accept

Please see my answer to recommendation 6. There is constant change occurring on much shorter timescales than 5 years. Programmes to respond to these challenges are being constantly developed and I will ensure that the service keeps the committee informed about these when appropriate. A 5 year plan would be out of date within the first 6 months given this rate of development.