

To: AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 25 NOVEMBER 2008

Item No:

Report of: Head of Environmental Development

Title of Report: Taxi Licensing Audit – Action Plan

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide Committee with a detailed action plan on how the recommendations of the KPMG report will be implemented.

Report Approved by:

Finance: Andy Collett

Legal: Daniel Smith

Policy Framework: Improving value for money and service performance.

Recommendation(s): Committee is requested to note the progress made on implementing actions from the Taxi Licensing Audit.

Summary

Committee received a report from KPMG on the audit of Taxi Licensing at its last meeting and requested a more detailed action plan on how the recommendations of the KPMG report will be implemented. The KPMG report recommended 10 actions. Immediate action has been taken where possible, other actions will require more detailed discussions with taxi licensing staff and some will require the approval of General Purposes Licensing Committee.

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Background papers:

Version number: 1

Taxi Licensing Audit Action Plan

Issue:	Priority: *	Action:	Implementation date:
1. Service Plan	Three	A Taxi Licensing Service Plan will be developed and include detailed aims, objectives, targets and performance indicators. The Service Plan will be taken to General Purposes Licensing Committee for approval and to agree a programme for reporting activity to the committee. A similar approach is included in the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and activities reported to Committee at quarters 2 and 4.	Service Plan for 2009/10 to be taken to General Purposes Licensing Committee for approval.
2. Proactive Enforcement Activity	Two	An Enforcement Activity Plan will be included in the Service Plan. Management will explore the potential for improved enforcement across the range of licensing activities (including Taxi Licensing) with the formation of Environmental Development. Note: It should be appreciated that any targets must be flexible enough to allow for the very wide variance of circumstances throughout the year and other call upon the police etc.	As above
3. Issue of Vehicle Licensing Plates	One	The possibility of a further upgrade for the LalPac system is being explored together with costs. Awaiting reply from LalPac.	April 2009
4. Drivers Badges	One	It will be possible to print the badges through the LaPac system once the upgrade is in place.	April 2009

Issue:	Priority: *	Action:	Implementation date:
5. Return of Vehicle Licence Plates	One	The previous procedure for ensuring the return of licence plates can be reinstated now that the reception area is fully staffed by permanent employees.	December 2008
6. Enforcement Checks	Three	Letters are now sent out 2 months in advance to give licence holders sufficient time to respond.	October 2008
7. System Exception Reports	Two	An recent upgrade has been applied to the Lalpac system. Individual records show actions taken. Lalpac does not currently have the capability of creating exception reports as no other users have asked for this facility. This will be explored with software supplier.	October 2008
8. Application Checks	Three	Nationally agreed best practice is for CRB checks every 3 years. There are resource implications for annual checks and additional costs would have to be covered by licence holders by way of a fee increase. Note: No problems have been identified in present system and many other authorities only <i>re-licence</i> 3 yearly and most do not carry out DVLA checks.	(To explore further in the service plan which will be taken to General Purposes Licensing Committee)
9. Segregation of Duties	Two	Procedures will be reviewed to include checks before licences can be issued. Note: Lean staffing makes complete segregation of duties impossible to achieve. The cost of providing LalPac to test centres is prohibitive. (Approx. £15,000)	December 2008

Issue:	Priority: *	Action:	Implementation date:
10. Enforcement Service Level Agreements	Two	<p>A formal SLA should be developed with other departments within Authority to enable the licensing team to borrow staff to assist in enforcement activities. The SLA should include arrangements to recompense departments for use of staff as well as for individuals in respect of working unsociable hours.</p> <p>Note: SLAs can be explored with other departments but officers consider that a better arrangement would be to engage individual members of staff (with their line managers permission) to assist in these proactive enforcement checks. This has worked well for many years.</p>	April 2009

<p>*Priority One: Issues arising referring to important matters that are fundamental to the system of internal control. We believe that the matters observed might cause a business objective not to be met or leave a risk unmitigated and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency</p>	<p>Priority Two: Issues arising referring mainly to matters that have an important effect on controls but do not require immediate action. A business objective may still be met in full or in part or a risk adequately mitigated but the weakness represents a significant deficiency in the system.</p>	<p>Priority Three: Issues arising that would, if corrected, improve internal control in general but are not vital to the overall system of internal control.</p>
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