
CHARGES FOR TAXI TESTING/MOTs

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker,
Deputy Leader and Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval from Members for the introduction of charges for taxi testing and MOT services.

Summary

2. As part of the relocation from Vicarage Road to the new Depot at Allington Way, an MOT testing station has been installed in the Fitting Shop. The Council is therefore in a position to carry out MOTs for both registered taxis, Council vehicles and the general public's vehicles. The proposed testing and charges are included within this Report.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Members approve that charges at paragraph 11 for both registered taxis and general public.

Reasons

4. The recommendation is supported to enable new charges to be brought in for this new service.

**Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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CR

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact on Crime & Disorder as a result of this Report.
Health and Well Being	There is no impact on Health and Well Being as a result of this Report.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications as a result of this Report.
Diversity	There is no impact on Diversity as a result of this Report.
Wards Affected	The new Depot is based in Lingfield Ward.
Groups Affected	The only Group affected as a result of this Report will be registered taxi owners with the Council.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no change to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework as a result of this Report.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There is no impact on the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	Additional income will be achieved by the introduction of an MOT service at the new Depot.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background

5. The Council has not undertaken private hire or hackney carriage vehicle inspection and testing since the late 1990's due to inadequate facilities at the existing Vicarage Road Depot. As part of the move from the existing site to the new Depot at Allington Way, the opportunity was taken to include an MOT testing station within the garage facility to enable the Council to carry out MOTs to its own vehicles and also bring back in-house the inspection and testing of private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. In addition, the Council can also offer MOT testing facilities to the general public, however, the Council is not able to carry out any repairs to the vehicles therefore providing a truly independent testing service.

6. In 2000 Darlington Borough Council signed an agreement with VOSA to transfer vehicle testing from the Council's own in-house provision to VOSA at Darlington. VOSA carried out testing of all vehicles licensed for private hire or hackney carriages and all vehicles applying for a licence, however, in June 2012 VOSA gave formal notice to the Council that they would no longer be able to carry out this function on behalf of the Council after 31 March 2013. Since then temporary arrangements have been put in place (whereby Licencing Officers have carried out the visual inspection with the owner of the taxi being required to provide an MOT

certificate from an authorised garage when required) until such time as the new Depot became available.

Proposal

7. At present there are 238 licensed taxis with the Council, 173 hackney carriage and 65 private hire. Each of these vehicles must be presented to the Council's nominated test centre prior to being licensed and every six months thereafter. In addition, there is a legal requirement that all hackney carriage vehicles should be subject to an MOT test or its equivalent once a year and for private hire vehicles the requirement is for an annual MOT after the vehicle is three years old.
8. The Council will also be able to carry out MOTs on its own vehicles of 3.5 tonne and below. Currently the Council has 122 vehicles in this category which are sent for MOT testing to a private garage.
9. The Council will provide the testing and MOT service for taxi licensing, testing of its own vehicles 3.5 tonne and under and offer an MOT service to the general public. The proposed charges for this new service are as follows:-

Taxi charges

Taxi Vehicle Test	£50.00
Taxi Vehicle Test + MOT	£60.00
Failure to attend (less than 48 hours notice)	£50.00
Re-test	£25.00
Re-test including emissions	£35.00
Re-test (emissions only)	£10.00

General Public Charges

MOT, Motorbike Class I & II	£25.00
MOT standard car Class IV	£30.00
MOT Class V vehicles	£40.00
MOT Class VII vehicles	£45.00

Financial Implications

10. Subject to Members approving the proposed charges in paragraph 10, estimated income/savings will be as follows.

No of vehicles	Price	Total
238 licensed taxis	£110.00 p.a.	£26,180
60 MOTs for Council vehicles (saving)	£30.00	£ 1,800
62 MOTs for Council vehicles (saving)	£40.00	£ 2,480
Estimated income from general public (250 MOTs)	£30.00	£ 7,500
		£37,960

11. Initially there will be no additional staffing costs as this work will be absorbed into existing resources as the number of vehicles on the Council fleet reduces, particularly with the changes to refuse and recycling collections. However, should the service, particularly for the general public, significantly increase then there would be a need to employ an additional fitter which would be funded by the income generated from the new service as indicated in the table above.
12. There are general powers which do allow the Council to undertake MOT's for members of the public as a discretionary service, as well as private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. Powers to charge for this service derives from the Localism Act and the Local Government Act 2003, however the charges should not exceed the cost of provision taking one year with another.

HR Implications

13. There is currently a vacancy within the Fitting Shop for a full time fitter. This post will be replaced by a fitter/MOT tester. Consultation has taken place with the staff with regard to the proposed changes. There are no TUPE implications as a result of providing MOT services in-house.

Equalities Considerations

14. Consideration has been given as to whether there are any issues with regard to equalities impact and protected characteristics and it is deemed that there is no implications as a result of these charges.