



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

TAXI LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

9 FEBRUARY 2005

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Taxi Licensing Review - Update

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To approve the prioritisation of taxi licensing workload by officers.
- 1.2 To request the Director of Corporate Services to further update this Committee on the implementation of the new taxi licensing systems by July 2005.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Taxi Licensing Section was the subject of a review of its service provision in 2002. The reviews findings, which highlighted necessary modernisation of systems, operational procedures and reception facilities, were reported to this Committee and a work plan to improve service delivery was approved.
- 2.2 This Committee has subsequently received 'update' reports setting out the progress in achieving the work plan requirements. Significant achievements to date include:
 - Modernisation of the Taxi Licensing Reception Areas
 - Improved interview facilities
 - Introduction of a 'non-appointment' system and longer opening hours, resulting in significantly reduced waiting times
 - A new IT system
 - Changes to staff duties and responsibilities

These have led to improvements in the service to the Taxi trade.

- 2.3 Maintaining service standards whilst trying to implement large scale operational change has resulted in significantly increased workload and pressure for all staff in the section, at a time when the taxi trade's demands have also increased. This demand includes:
 - increase in numbers of licence applications
 - CRB requests
 - requests for knowledge tests
 - reports to Licensing Panel A
 - Licensing Policy issues/changes
 - members enquiries
 - taxi trade requests etcThis has placed a considerable strain on available resources, making it difficult for Licensing Managers to focus on completing the work plan.

- 2.4 In addition to this, the Taxi Licensing Section is under pressure to meet the Government's 'e-government' targets for licensing, which the Council is committed to achieving. Consultants are currently reviewing and re-designing licensing systems with a view to implementing a customer relationship management (CRM) system. Such a system will bring significant benefits to customers wishing to access licensing services via the Internet and will further improve licensing operations. However, the work on the CRM system requires significant additional input from licensing managers and staff in the development and implementation of the package, adding further resource pressures to the Section.
- 2.5 The Environmental Health Manager will also have to concentrate on the implementation of new liquor licensing procedures over coming months, thus reducing not only strategic, but also operational capacity.
- 2.6 In view of this Licensing Managers propose to prioritise all taxi licensing work for the next 6 months to allow them to focus on completing the outstanding work plan items, particularly those relating to IT systems and licensing procedures. To achieve this a number of outstanding policy based issues will be delayed/deferred until the work plan is completed. This will mean that, for the next few months, only urgent matters will be referred to this Committee and some requests for service from customers will not be actioned straight away.
- 2.7 In order to ensure proper accountability, the decisions on urgent and deferred issues will be agreed with Chair of the Committee. This will include relevant issues as they arise.
- 2.8 Failure to take these measures would jeopardise the satisfactory completion of the work plan and would, therefore, have an adverse impact on service delivery. Alternatively, additional staffing could be employed to assist in meeting service demands; however, not only does this have cost implications (which would impact upon licence fees) but also the short timescales involved make this impractical.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None directly arising, However, if additional resources were needed to meet demand there would be budgetary implications; any additional cost incurred would need to be funded from additional license fees.

Legal

2. None

Personnel

3. Licensing staff, including managers, are unable to meet all the current service demands/expectations. Unless some items are deferred/delayed there will be a need to employ additional staff to assist the section, the cost of which will have to be met from licence fees.

Equalities impact

4. None.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. Hackney carriage and private hire licensing contributes to the Council's objective of **protecting and supporting people**. Completion of the work plan will contribute to ensuring the provision of **integrated, cost effective services**.