

COMMITTEE:	CENTRAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
DATE:	25 JUNE 2012
TITLE:	AMEND ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTING GARAGES TO UNDERTAKE TAXI VEHICLE TESTS
PURPOSE:	FOR DECISION
AUTHOR:	HEAD OF REGULATORY

BACKGROUND

The Council issues licences to around 217 hackney vehicles and 186 private hire vehicles throughout the county. It is essential for each vehicle to receive 2 annual mechanical checks so as to comply with the conditions of the licence –

- **STANDARD MOT** – the vehicle owner may choose any garage which is approved for carrying out the test.
- **SECOND TEST** –Presently, the second test is undertaken at a competent garage choosed by the Council, with one garage appointed for the purpose in each area.

These requirements have been incorporated into the licence conditions and adopted within the Council’s Taxi vehicle licensing policy.

The requirements are also based on the guidance given in the Department of Transport’s Best Practice Guidance.

Presently, 3 garages which comply with the relevant requirements have been authorised to undertake the MOT tests as well as the second mechanical test which is a requirement for taxi vehicles.

The Council’s own garage undertakes the tests for vehicles in the Meirionnydd area. The arrangements for choosing and appointing competent garages has been reviewed according to the decision of this Committee, every 3 years.

Currently, Officers from the licensing unit administer the process of making appointments as and when the vehicles require a test; the garage is responsible for undertaking the necessary checks ensuring that the results of the tests are sent to the licensing unit. The owner of the vehicle makes a payment directly to the garage for the cost of the test.

The process of reviewing the current arrangements was commenced recently by means of an advertisement in the press inviting expressions of interest by garages in the areas of Dwyfor and Arfon . Competent garages interested in undertaking the work were asked to write to the council indicating their interest. The advertisement was not extended to the Meirionnydd area at the time – as the council’s own garage continues at present to provide the service of testing vehicles.

A letter expressing interest was received by 14 garages within the Arfon and Dwyfor areas. It can be confirmed that every garage which responded is able to provide what is necessary for the testing arrangements, at a reasonable price.

The garages which have responded are –

LAS Landrovers, Llandegai
Elias Garage, Bangor
Gwalia Garage, Caeathro
Garej Arwyn, Penygroes
Povey's Garage, Penygroes
Modurdy B & K Williams, Caernarfon
Modurdy Dolydd, Groeslon
Modurdy Ffrydlas, Bethesda
G&H Car and Commercial, Caernarfon
Peblig Tyre & Exhaust , Caernarfon
Hardy's, Pwllheli
Auto Mech Services, Criccieth
A&E Motors, Porthmadog
Bridge Garage, Pwllheli

OPTIONS FOR REVIEWING THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Department of Transport's Best Practice Guidance, recommends that more than one competent garage should be authorised in such a large geographical area as Gwynedd.

As 14 garages have expressed an interest, it will be necessary to consider the following points before reaching a decision on the way forward –

- All 14 garages reach the required standard for the contract
- There is only a slight difference in the costs of the tests provided by each garage
- In the interest of fairness in respect of the competent garages which have expressed an interest – the present arrangements must be reviewed
- Authorising the 14 garages to offer the tests would encourage fair competition between the garages, and an increase in choice for the owners of hackney and private hire vehicles.
- Should the current arrangement in the Meirionnydd area be reviewed (where the tests are undertaken by the council's garage) and advertise inviting an expression of interest from garages in the area?

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee grants permission - to authorise the 14 competent garages which have expressed an interest in undertaking mechanical tests for hackney and private hire vehicles; and to advertise for expressions of interest amongst garages in the Meirionnydd area.