

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: 19 March 2013  
title: Vehicle Testing Arrangements  
submitted by: Chief Executive  
principal author: Mair Hill

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the proposals put forward by the Council's testing centre to increase their fees for testing and seek Committee's views on whether they consider it still appropriate to have only one testing centre.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
- Community Objectives – The review of testing arrangements will promote the Council's aim of being a well managed Council.
  - Corporate Priorities - N/A
  - Other Considerations – N/A

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Currently, all private hire and hackney carriage vehicles are tested at one independent garage within Ribble Valley. The Council does not set the fee for this it is set by the garage and has been £20 for the last 15 years. The owner of the garage is free to review the fee at any time and has indicated that he may do so. The procedure in other authorities differs. Some have their own testing centre and employees who carry out the tests, others use more than one independent testing centre but some have the same arrangements as the Council with only one independent testing centre

2.2 The Licensing Officer has made enquiries with surrounding authorities and has established that their current fees are as follows:

- Blackburn - £60.90;
- Hyndburn - £52.50;
- Rossendale – Free with MOT;
- Pendle - £35.00; and
- Burnley - £64.50 (Private Hire)  
£81.00 (Hackney Carriage)

The current fee is therefore set at a level, which is reasonable for licence holders.

2.3 There is some guidance on the issues of the number of testing centres in the best practice guidance, which states "*There is sometimes criticism that local authorities provide only one testing centre for their area (which may be geographically extensive). So it is good practice for local authorities to **consider** having more than one testing station. There could be an advantage in contracting out the testing work, and to different garages. In that way the licensing authority can benefit from competition in costs. (The Vehicle Operators and*

*Standards Agency – VOSA – may be able to assist where there are local difficulties in provision of testing stations.” [Emphasis added]*

### 3. ISSUES

3.1 Committee has considered this issue previously and decided that to have more than one centre could give rise to inconsistency between testing centres or put pressure on centres to be more lenient to secure a greater share of the business. However, in light of the potential increase in fees, Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to retain the current arrangements for testing or whether it requires a more detailed report to be submitted to the next committee meeting to allow it to explore other options.

3.2 Committee should note that there have been no recent complaints raised by licence holders about the service they receive.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – Resources will be needed within the Legal and Democratic Services Department to carry out the review of the current arrangements
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None
- Political - None
- Reputation – Considering revising the current arrangements will enhance the Council’s reputation as a well managed Council.
- Equality & Diversity – None

### 5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Consider the current arrangements.

5.2 Confirm whether it is content with the existing testing arrangements or whether it requires a detailed review and report to be prepared and submitted to a future committee.

MARSHAL SCOTT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MAIR HILL  
SOLICITOR

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

REF: MJH/Licensing Committee/19 March 2013

For further information please ask for Mair Hill, extension 3216