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Appendix C

Our ref:

Your ref:

Environmental Health

Contact: Tara King

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Dear

Ref: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976
Proposed changes to vehicle testing procedures for Private Hire & Hackney Carriage vehicles

Further to my letter dated 11th May 2007 relating to the proposed adoption of new vehicle testing procedures.

I would like to thank the many proprietors that expressed views and raised many valid points that required further clarification before a final proposal could be presented to the trade for further consideration.

I would therefore like to outline the Councils proposals and answer some of the most frequently raised questions.

A number of points were received in the last consultation letter that covered the following points:-

Q:- Why can't South Cambridgeshire District Council do the tests in house?

A:- South Cambridgeshire District Council does not have an M.O.T centre and is therefore excluded from this scheme.

Q;- Will the CoC test be a duplication of work and therefore an unwarranted expense?

A:- It is not intended that garages will duplicate what is already covered in the standard M.O.T, however there are certain parts of the test where the Councils expectations may be higher than that of the M.O.T and extra checking may be required i.e the M.O.T will check for condition of pipework but may still pass a vehicle with an oil leak whereas the extra check will set down a higher standard in relation to such items, therefore a more detailed check will be required.

Q:- does this mean that we will no longer be required to go to Waterbeach depot?

A:- Once the mechanical test is complete you will still be required to visit Waterbeach Depot to collect your plate and supply details of ownership & insurance. The depot will still be used in future for ad hoc checks to ensure mechanical fitness

Q:- How will this affect stretch limousines?

A: Due to the specific requirements for testing limousines it is not envisaged to include these vehicles at this present time in the Certificate of Compliance testing.

Q:- Can the garage issue the Council plate?

A:- Unfortunately they cannot, legislation states that the plate must be issued by the licensing authority i.e South Cambridgeshire District Council

Q:- I fear that the garages will make unnecessary work for themselves in order to make money?

A:- Any garages joining the scheme will be closely monitored. Garages found to abusing the scheme will be withdrawn and will very possibly lose their status as an M.O.T garage with VOSA.

Q;- If my vehicle fails the test do I have to have any repair work done at the garage?

A:- No, however you will be required to re-submit the vehicle for a further test which if done in the timescales referred to within this letter then no re –charge will apply.

Q:- If I have a CoC certificate will I also have an M.O.T certificate?

A:- No, a CoC replaces the M.O.T and is a legal document for the purpose of obtaining road tax, insurance etc. This will be explained on the certificate issued so that Post offices, Police etc understand what the certificate is.

Q:- if I stop using my vehicle as a licensed vehicle or sell it as a domestic vehicle what do I need to do?

A:- A CoC is only valid whilst a vehicle has a licence issued by the Local Authority, therefore if you surrender your licence or sell it on as a normal domestic vehicle you will be required to obtain a new M.O.T

The scheme means that VOSA, M.O.T approved garages can be appointed by the Council to undertake the test which replaces the need for a normal M.O.T. This test would be a normal M.O.T (for which the standard charge would apply) plus extra checks as identified by the Council to ensure the vehicle meets our conditions of licensing and is fit for the purpose of being licensed as a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage

At present the following garages have expressed an interest:-

1. Station garage, Fulbourn
2. Above All Autocentre, Great Gransden
3. Andy`s Kars, Bar Hill
4. Swavesey Garage, Swavesey
5. Station Garage services, Meldreth
6. Linton Village Motors, Abington
7. Autoquick, Gt Shelford
8. CSC vehicle service & repairs, Hardwick

A couple of other garages have expressed interest but are yet to submit their interest as requested in writing, however the scheme will not operate as a “closed” scheme and other garages may join at any time subject to council approval and being a VOSA approved garage.

Whilst nothing has been approved or agreed at any level the garages submitted varied costings. However Officer are recommending to the Licensing Committee that the fee should be set at a figure of £30 or below. This figure will be the maximum fee that can be charged by the garages for the extra work, this fee would be in addition to the normal M.O.T fee and would be payable directly to the garages at the time of testing.

It should be noted that although the Council will set a maximum fee, garages may charge less if they wish.

The new process for licensing a vehicle would be as follows:-

1. Present the vehicle for testing at an appointed garage of your choice from the approved list issued by South Cambridgeshire District Council.
2. Once the vehicle has passed the test it would be issued with a Certificate of Compliance (in place of the existing M.O.T)
3. Present the certificate along with proof of ownership and suitable insurance to our depot at Waterbeach within one month of the issue of the certificate to pay for and collect your new plate/licence.

The enhanced part of test above the M.O.T test itself will cover the following main areas:-

- Checking V5 documentation
- Checking drivers badge
- Enhanced inspection on engine & transmission to check for leaks, temporary means of preventing oil leaks would constitute a failure
- Enhanced inspection and test of the cooling system including examination of the radiator, drive belts etc for security, deterioration and completeness
- Enhanced check of bodywork, sharp or protruding edges and panels not matching original colour i.e blue door on a red car would constitute a failure
- Interior condition including security, cleanliness of seats etc
- Tax disc – in date and relates to vehicle being tested
- lights / fog lights must work without flickering
- Interior lights should be working (roof courtesy lights etc)
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher stored or fitted in a secure manner
- All windows to be fully operational
- Heating system to be in full working order
- Radios (where fitted, to be secure)

Officers will be recommending that any vehicle failing the extra part of the test will have a period not exceeding ten working days in which to present there vehicle for a retest at the original garage without incurring a further charge.

In Addition to the recommendations regarding the annual CoC test officers will also be recommending to the Licensing Committee that a new condition be introduced to check vehicle emissions approximately every six months, it is envisaged that this will not incur any extra costs to the trade as this could be done at the time of a service by your normal garage and the results can be forwarded to this office by post/fax, a reminder would be sent in the normal manner requesting a check be done within 2 months of receipt of the letter.

As part of our consultation with the trade, the Licensing Department would be grateful for any further views and comments you may wish to submit on the proposed introduction of this type of testing.

In order for the department to process all views and comments I would appreciate your response in writing either to the above address or by e mail no later than the 14th September 2007. Along with all previous letters any further written views submitted will form the basis of a report recommending the adoption of this testing to be placed before the Licensing Committee and to come into effect no later than April 2008.

Yours sincerely

Myles Bebbington
Licensing Officer

