

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 February 2020

Performance Management Scrutiny KPI PP22 Percentage of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles inspected which comply with regulations

This indicator was established with the purpose of providing an indication of both the standards of safety and the compliance with licence requirements being demonstrated by licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles operating in Northampton. The licence requirement encompasses both vehicle safety requirements and some more procedural licence conditions such as the requirement to carry a copy of the licence condition booklet and display no smoking signage.

Data for the indicator is provided from routine vehicle checks that are undertaken by licensing enforcement officers and from the results of specific operations which are carried out with the Police and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

The target for the indicator is that 70% of vehicles tested should be compliant with the required standards. During 2019/20 performance on this indicator has not met the required standard. Due to staff absence within the licensing team, there has been a significant reduction in the number of both routine vehicle checks and in the number of specific operations. The ability to carry out vehicle checking operations is dependent upon the availability of partner agencies. The Police must be present to stop the vehicles and the specialist inspectors from DVSA must be present to carry out some of the specific safety checks. There have been a small number of occasions when planned operations have been cancelled due to these partner agencies not being able to provide enough staff. In addition, the operations that have been carried out, have been targeted with the aim of checking vehicles which visually appear to be in poor condition to determine whether they are safe to be on the road.

As a result of the smaller number of vehicles tested and the targeting of the testing, the indicator has been reported on a quarterly basis. In the April – June quarter no tests were undertaken. In the quarter to September 40 vehicles were tested. 23 were compliant with standards and 8 had a safety defect. In the quarter to December 39 vehicles were tested, 30 of these were compliant and 9 had defects.

Whilst these figures give some cause for concern, it should be remembered that many of the tests were targeted at vehicle which appeared to be in poor condition. In addition, where safety defects were found, the DVSA took appropriate enforcement action, requiring the vehicles were taken off the road until the defects were remedied.

Work is currently under way to review the definition of this indicator and it is planned to report data which enables the impact of enforcement action to be judged. This will be in place from April 2020 onwards.

The Licensing team are now back up to full strength so going forward we will also ensure that tests are undertaken during each quarter to support effective monitoring.