



RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY: Martin Eden
PORTFOLIO AREA: Environment

SUBJECT:

To procure and fit a protective transparent polycarbonate screen in private hire taxis currently licensed by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

1. DECISION

To procure and fit protective transparent solid polycarbonate screens in private hire taxis licensed by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, to provide separation between the taxi driver and their passengers to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections and transmissions

2. REASON FOR DECISION

Taxi drivers have been identified as a key risk BAME group, due to their likely rate of exposure to COVID-19 and potential to transmit the virus to their customers.

Local estimates for Blackburn with Darwen suggest that drivers take approximately 30-35 journeys per shift and could work up to two shifts per day. One driver could therefore come into contact with anywhere from 30 to over 200 customers per day and there are currently approximately 1120 drivers registered by Blackburn with Darwen Council (though it should be noted there is an element of double counting as many drivers are dual registered).

The Council will fund the purchase and installation of the polycarbonate screens. The taxi drivers would be responsible for contacting their motor insurance company to make them aware of the modification and for replacing the screen as and when it becomes necessary.

Prices for the supply and fitting of the screens have been obtained from four different companies. Licensing4U has submitted the most economically advantageous quote of £49.00 each for the supply of the screens and a further £15.00 to fit each screen. Accordingly, it will cost £64,000 to supply and fit the 1000 screens required for the taxis that are licensed by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

3. BACKGROUND

The Pennine Lancashire Morbidity and Mortality Group has been established as a means of conducting rapid data analysis to understand where problems were or could arise and mobilise immediate responses, in the form of evidence based interventions across the 'in and out of hospital delivery plans'.

A number of initial assumptions have been agreed by the group, which have either been observed, i.e. data has outlined that they have happened, or anticipated, i.e. data and local intelligence suggests there is a high probability that they have or will happen.



Each of these assumptions are likely to lead to excess deaths or increases in preventable morbidity if they are not acted upon. As such, it has been agreed that generating responses to these assumptions will now forms the basis of the work programme of the Morbidity and Mortality Group, who will make recommendations to influence the restoration, recovery and transformation plans for Pennine Lancashire health and care services moving forward.

There may also be a number of interventions proposed which require additional funding. An example of a key funding ask that has emerged is in relation to the recommendation to provide Perspex screens to taxi drivers.

All Pennine Lancashire licensing officers have taken the decision, along with Directors of Public Health for Lancashire, to recommend the installation of perspex screens, therefore accepting that there is likely to be some benefits in reducing transmission. The screens are likely to provide added benefit, especially when coupled with the taxi driver using of face coverings/masks.

The screens also offer some protection to drivers from abusive behaviour (e.g. some drivers have previously been spat at and there are significant risks for drivers if this happens during the pandemic).

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

4.1 Do Nothing - Taxi drivers have been identified as a key risk BAME group. The drivers will come into contact with between 30 and 200 customers a day so their likely rate of exposure to COVID-19 and potential to transmit the virus to their customers is high.

4.2 Install a less expensive PVC screen – the polycarbonate screen is better quality and more robust so will last longer. The polycarbonate screen also better meets the safety standards as adjudged by licensing officers.

For the aforementioned reasons, these options were rejected.

Further information is available via the following link [] or from the report author

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Martin Eden
DATE:	24 July 2020
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	

Signed: 	
Director: Martin Eden	Date: 24 July 2020