

**Name of meeting and date: Licensing & Safety Committee 11 February 2015**

**Title of report: Taxi & Private Hire Licensing – Appointments System**

<b>Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Is it in the Council’s Forward Plan?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Is it eligible for “call in” by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Cabinet member portfolio</b>	<b>Regeneration, Environment &amp; Transportation</b>

**Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted: ALL**

**Public or private: Public**

## **1 SUMMARY**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the appointments system currently operated by the licensing service.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

2.2 Historically, licensing operated a counter system for the taxi & private trade on a 3 day basis in Huddersfield and a two day basis in Dewsbury. Previously customers could attend as and when they wished during the opening hours of the counters. This often resulted in long waiting times when there was peak demand. Customers can take from as little as 15 minutes to serve e.g. a straightforward renewal to periods of in excess of 1 hour if they have for example several vehicle renewal applications to submit at the same time. There would often also be periods of quiet with staff having no customers to serve.

2.3 In order to address this In January 2014 an appointments system was introduced. This was times to coincide with taxi licensing calls being transferred to Kirklees Direct (KD). Customers now ring KD and make an appointment suitable to the application they are making. For example a driver renewal requires a 15 minute appointment; an application for a driver new grant requires a 30 minute appointment.

### **3 THE SYSTEM**

3.1 On introduction the system was working extremely well and both customers and staff were complimentary about it. Unfortunately, a couple of weeks into the new system two members of the counter staff went absent from work due to illness.

3.2 This led to issues manning the counter over the 5 days required. A result of this was that on occasions timely appointments were not available to customers.

3.3 In order to address this, emergency counter sessions were put on with the customers being given weekend and evening appointments. This was serviced by overtime from existing staff and bringing in ex members of staff to assist us with these additional session.

3.4 The matter was eventually resolved by recruiting new staff to work on the counter. Whilst they were being trained the extra evening and emergency appointments were still made available to customers with urgent applications.

3.5 The counter is currently back to operating 5 days a week across both counters and there are no longer issues for drivers obtaining timely appointments.

### **4. THE TRADE**

4.1 At the presentation of the petition presented to the Cabinet on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The trade representative Mr Ismail Bhana made further representations about the appointment scheme and stated that the trade were unhappy with it and they would like to see the system abolished.

4.2 Officers appreciate that those customers who may have experienced difficulties last year when the system was in disarray may not have had a good experience. Some of those customers will not though have yet had an opportunity to re-evaluate their opinion since then as their annual renewal may not yet have come around.

4.3 As a result of Mr Bhana's representations I arranged for a customer satisfaction survey to be carried out and this took place between 12/12/14 and 08/01/15.

4.4 The results of this survey are attached at Appendix 1.

4.5 There are not therefore any proposals or plans at this time to either abolish the appointments system or amend it further.

### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no resource issues.

### **6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None

### **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

For further information on this report please contact Catherine Walter on 456868 or by email at [catherine.walter@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.walter@kirklees.gov.uk)

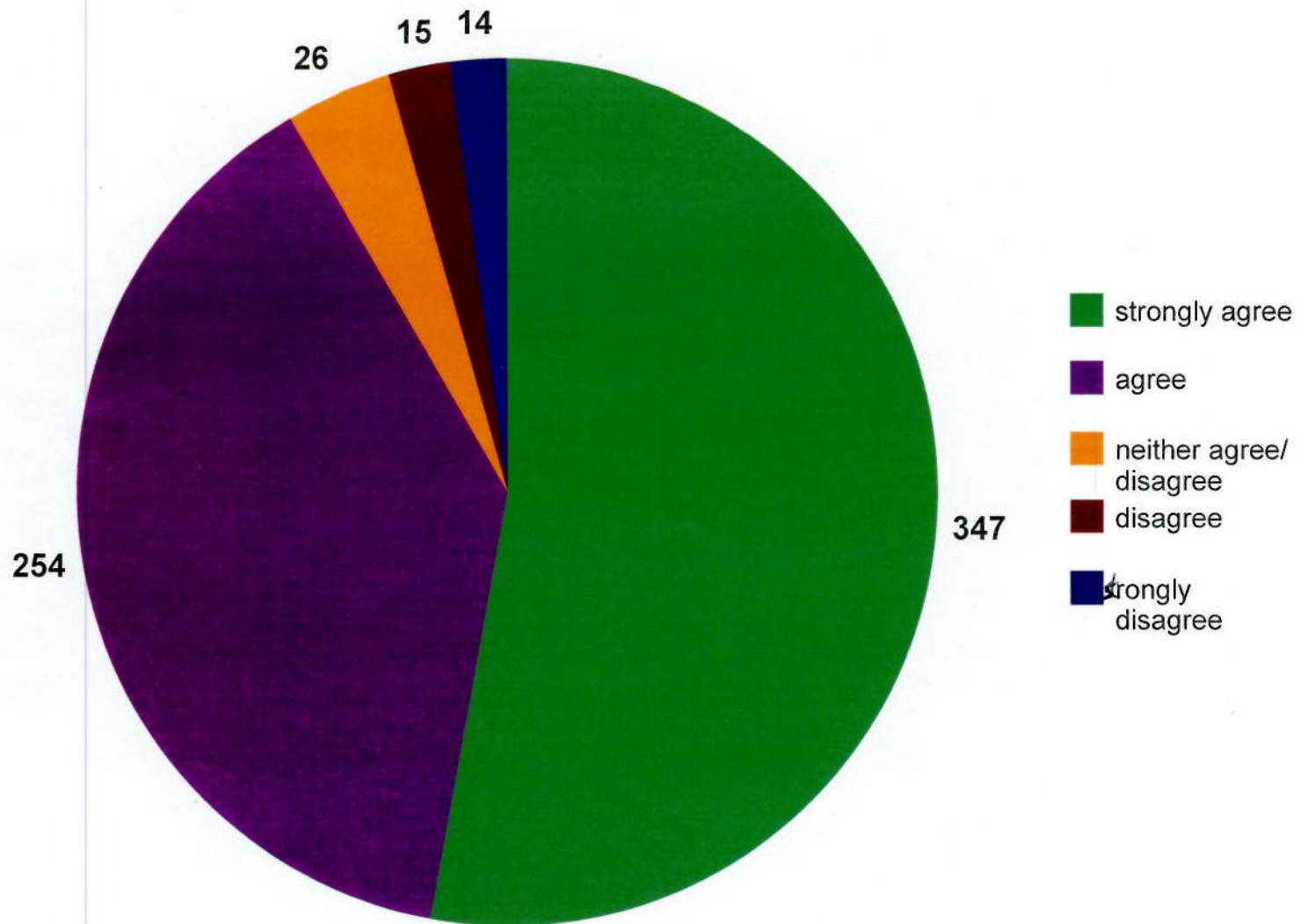
**How was your experience today?**

***Between 12.12.2014 & 8.1.2014, 110 customers answered the questions below:***

We are currently asking our customers about how satisfied they are with our service.

QUESTION	ANSWER (Please tick the Box which most closely fits)					OTHER COMMENTS
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
It was easy to make your appointment for today	<b>60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
You were able to book an appointment within a short period of time – if you disagree with this please indicate how long you had to wait for an appointment	<b>44</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
You were able to get everything done today that you wanted to	<b>63</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	
You were served on time	<b>72</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
You prefer to get served by appointment rather than to just turn up and maybe wait for long periods	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	
You are satisfied with the appointments system	<b>57</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	

Customer Satisfaction -Appointment System is a good idea



Questionnaire 12.12.2014 & 8.1.2014