

The Proprietor

Please ask For: John Gerring
Direct Dial: 01902 696205
Direct Fax: 01922 696219
E-mail: licensing@sstaffs.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 15 February 2016

Dear Sirs

INVITATION TO QUOTE FOR THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT FOR TESTING OF PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

I write to invite a Quote from you for South Staffordshire Council's contract for testing of private hire vehicles and hackney carriage vehicles. As you are aware this Council has the function of licensing private hire vehicles and hackney carriage vehicles. Private Hire Vehicles can only be booked through an office (i.e. an operator) and Hackney Carriages can pick up on the street without the need for a booking.

The Council currently licenses approximately 140 private hire vehicles and 6 hackney carriages. The Council currently requires vehicles to be tested between 1 and 3 times a year depending on the age of the vehicle. This equates to approximately 250 vehicle tests per year (based on the current fleet).

The Council is not allowed to grant a licence to a private hire vehicle unless it is satisfied that the vehicle is suitable in type, size and design for use as a private hire vehicle, is in a suitable mechanical condition, safe and comfortable. The Council also has to be satisfied that the vehicle is not of such a style that it may be confused with a hackney carriage. Similarly in terms of hackney carriages the Council must be satisfied that the vehicle is mechanically safe.

Testing fees will be paid directly to the Council's approved garage.

The Council's 4 main aims with regard to licensing of taxis/private hire vehicles are:

- Safety and health of drivers and the public
- High standards of vehicle safety, comfort and access
- Prevention of crime and disorder and the protection of consumers
- Equality and accessibility in service provision

As you may be aware this Council does not have its own vehicle testing facility and therefore tests are to be carried out on its behalf by a contractor.

It is important by virtue of section 50(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 garage tests have to be carried out within the District of South Staffordshire.

In essence the vehicle test is at the level of an MOT test with a few extra checks to make sure that the Council's conditions are being adhered to. However the Council would expect the garage to err on the side of caution and ensure that public safety is protected. We are conscious that MOT's are based solely on safety at the time of testing whereas we would expect a vehicle to be safe immediately after the MOT and not just at the time of testing – i.e. not to have a serious defect that is likely to manifest itself in the near future (namely before the next test).

The vehicle test is an assessment on behalf of the Council as to whether:

1. the vehicle is in a suitable mechanical condition
2. it is safe
3. it complies with the conditions attached to its licence.

The attached checklist sets out the items that the Council wishes to be identified in addition to the usual MOT checks.

The only difference is for hackney carriages. Hackney carriages must have a meter and those meters must be tested by the Council to make sure that they are properly calibrated. The meter would need to be tested by the garage as part of the garage test.

I set out below some information about the proposed contract.

1. The Contract

When will the contract start?

The Council wishes to start the contract no later than 1st April 2016

How long will it last?

It will be for a period of 2 years with an option to extend for a further 1 year.

What terms will the contract be on?

The Contract will be on terms based on the Council's standard business terms, which are attached to this letter. Exact terms and conditions will be agreed once the successful Quote has been identified.

Is the Council prepared to contract with more than one garage – namely one for class 4 and one for class 7 vehicles?

The Council will consider this as an option if we do not receive a suitable Quote offering the full range of testing.

Is the Council prepared to contract with more than one garage – namely one in one part of the District and one in another part of the District?

The Council will consider this as an option – namely awarding the entire contract to one garage or awarding the contract to two separate garages if no garage can meet all the demand. However its first preference is for one contract.

2. The Tests

How many test will there be a year?

The Council anticipates that there will be between 250 and 300 tests a year. The Council cannot guarantee exactly how many tests there will be but, if an acceptable Quote is received, it intends to grant a single exclusive contract for the work, so that any tests that there are will be carried out by the successful garage.

How would the test work?

The test would be booked directly by the driver or operator with your garage having first received a letter from the Council indicating that their test is now due. For vehicles being plated for the first time, the driver or operator is required to have the vehicle inspected before arranging for the Council to plate the vehicle.

The driver/operator will pay any fees directly to the garage for the test and for any re-test required.

Once the test has been completed you would be expected to provide the driver or operator with the 'Garage Test Confirmation Sheet' and additional checklist. However, if you consider that the vehicle is not in a suitable mechanical condition, is not safe, is not comfortable or is not in compliance with the conditions attached to the licence (as set out on the checklist) we would expect you to contact the Council immediately so that an appropriate action can be considered.

How long would each test last?

We anticipate that each test would last no more than 5-10 minutes longer than an ordinary MOT test.

Will the test be an MOT test?

The Council wishes to incorporate the MOT test into the tests the Council carries out so that one of the tests carried out a year will also be the MOT test. The Council would like the quote provided to be with and without this facility.

What class of vehicles will be subject to testing?

There are two classes of vehicle:

- Those with a wheelbase less than 12 feet in length
- Those with a wheelbase of 12ft or more

The Council recognises that there may be additional costs involved in testing larger vehicles and when quoting for the Quote separate fees can be provided.

3. The Quote Process

When does the Quote need to be submitted by?

All proposed Quotes must be received by no later than 4pm on Monday 7th March 2016. Quotes can either be sent by post, email or delivered by hand. They must be returned in the attached stamped addressed envelope or another unmarked envelope with the heading **Taxi Test Bid Response** or by email to procurement@sstaffs.gov.uk. The envelopes/quote responses will be opened in the presence of two Council officers.

What information do I need to provide in the Quote?

The key information required is the following:

1. Price per initial tests, both with and without MOT certificate and for the two classes of vehicles. The quote should be for the test fee throughout the life of the contract;
2. Price per re-tests, both with and without MOT certificate and for the two classes of vehicles. The quote should be for the test fee throughout the life of the contract;
3. How many MOT bays you have;
4. How many MOT qualified testers are employed by you;
5. Who the contact for the garage would be and how the test would be administered;
6. What proposals you have for the garage in the next 2 years;
7. Details of the company's current financial position; and
8. Details from whom references can be obtained.

Any other information you wish to provide covering the contract criteria (set out below) would be welcomed.

On what basis will the decision be taken as to whom to award the contract to?

The decision will be made on the basis of which contract offers the best value for money to the Council and vehicle owners/operators. The criteria are set out below and incorporate the weighting attached to each element. The bids will be assessed and scored by a panel, including the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager. The criteria are as follows:

1. Price - 60%
2. Reliability - Confidence in the tests -15%
3. Ease of administration/ease of dealing with the garage -5%
4. Confidence in meeting the service levels detailed above - 10%
5. Confidence in carrying out the tests for the contract period - 10%

When will the decision be announced?

It is hoped that the decision will be made within 1 week of close of Quotes.

I hope the above information is sufficient for you to quote and I look forward to hearing from you. If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 01902 696250.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pearce
Licensing Officer



South Staffordshire Council

Garage Test Confirmation Sheet

Applicant name and contact number	
Vehicle make and registration	
Plate Number	
Number of Seats if over 4	
MOT Number:	MOT EXPIRY:

Date of original test	_____	Pass/Fail
Date of retest	_____	Pass/Fail

Comments – Advisory Information

I confirm that the above vehicle is safe and is in a suitable mechanical condition to MOT standard. See attached additional checklist for confirmation that it meets the conditions attached to its licence.

Signature of Technician: Date:

Garage Stamp

Private Hire/ Hackney Carriage Vehicle Additional Checklist

Safety and good order – The vehicle is maintained in a safe, comfortable, clean and tidy condition.

Appearance of vehicle – The paintwork is maintained in a high gloss finish of a uniform colour free from dents, scratches or rust.

Seats – The seats of the vehicle are properly cushioned and covered.

Floor – The floor of the vehicle has properly fitted carpet, mat or other suitable covering.

Luggage – There is a means of carrying and securing luggage in the rear of the vehicle.

Spare Tyre – There is, in or on the vehicle, a spare wheel and tyre, in good condition, properly inflated and suitable for the vehicle together with sufficient tools for fitting the same.

Safety equipment – The vehicle carries a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit, which are readily available for use.

Alterations – The vehicle does not appear to have undergone any material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle (including its colour).

Licence plate – A "licence plate" particular to the vehicle, is fitted securely to the exterior of the vehicle and is displayed in a clearly visible place and maintained in good order.

Identification Disc – An "identification disc" particular to the vehicle is displayed in a clearly visible place in the nearside corner of the front windscreen of the vehicle and is not concealed from view.

Private Hire Vehicles Only

Other Identification – Please indicate as follows:

1. Roof sign – The vehicle has a roof sign which bears the name and telephone number of the operator and the words "office bookings only" on the sign.

or

2. Door Livery – The vehicle has door livery that has the name and telephone number of the operator and the words "office bookings".

Exemption Letter - Vehicle has a letter re non display of plates.

Hackney carriage Vehicles Only

The hackney carriage is fitted with a taximeter and that is well maintained and clearly visible. The meter is set in accordance with the hackney carriage fare table, which is displayed prominently within the hackney carriage.

Signature of Technician:..... Date:.....

This confirmation must be passed to the licensing department before the issue of new plates.