

Meeting of:	LICENSING COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	24 MARCH 2026
Report Title:	BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL TAXI TESTING REGIME
Report Owner / Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, AND HR AND ELECTORAL
Responsible Officer:	KIRSTY EVANS LICENSING TEAM MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	For the Licensing Committee to decide on whether taxi and private hire vehicles have to obtain an MOT and additional compliance test at any Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) approved MOT testing station or to retain the current regime of in-house testing at Ty Thomas Testing Centre.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for members to consider the consultation responses from the taxi and private hire trade, along with comments from Ty Thomas Centre on the following proposals:
- i) To retain the current in-house testing regime. This requires proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from Ty Thomas Joint Maintenance Facility along with an additional taxi compliance check.
 - ii) To allow proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from any Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) approved MOT testing station in the County Borough, and that the same testing station undertakes an additional taxi compliance check.
- 1.2 This report outlines the consultation responses, additional information on testing requirements, views of other stakeholders and further considerations for members to make an informed decision on which proposal to adopt.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council must be satisfied that a vehicle is in a suitable mechanical condition, safe and comfortable before issuing a licence.
- 2.2 The Council currently uses its powers under Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to require all vehicles to be presented to the Council's in-house MOT testing station at Ty Thomas Joint Vehicle Maintenance Facility, Newlands Avenue, Brackla Industrial Estate, Bridgend. This requirement is in place until March 2026.
- 2.3 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) currently licence approximately 500 vehicles, with hackney carriages making up roughly 60% of the fleet. The number of vehicles BCBC licence saw a dip in Covid years, however we are now back to pre-Covid levels. A breakdown of the number of vehicles licensed since 2009 is detailed in **Appendix A**.
- 2.4 On 12 February 2026 the Licensing Committee resolved to consult with the taxi and private hire trade and other stakeholders on the following options with regards to taxi and private hire testing within Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC):
- i) To retain the current in-house testing regime. This requires proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from Ty Thomas Joint Maintenance Facility along with an additional taxi compliance check.
 - ii) To allow proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from any DVSA approved MOT testing station in the County Borough, and that the same testing station undertakes an additional taxi compliance check.
- 2.5 For information, there are currently 67 DVSA approved MOT testing stations within the County Borough.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 A consultation took place between the 12 February 2026 and 12 March 2026 where all BCBC licensed drivers, proprietors and private hire operators were invited to provide a consultation response on the aforementioned options.
- 3.2 47 responses were received from the trade, these responses were from a mix of licensed drivers, vehicle proprietors and private hire operators. The consultation received a response rate of approximately 17%.
- 3.3 Responses from the trade are summarised in the tables below.

Preferred option for future testing provision	
Option 1 – Retain in-house testing	5 (11%)
Option 2 – Accept MOT and compliance test from any DVSA approved garage	42 (89%)

Reasons for preferred option to retain in-house testing (option 1)
Same standard of testing
Easy to access/book
Excellent/professional service
Proprietors may know or have links to MOT stations who are willing to break the rules

Reasons for preferred option to move to obtaining an MOT and compliance test from any DVSA approved garage
Greater flexibility
Other garages are able to carry out repairs
Cost saving
Reduce resource for BCBC
Lack of appointments with current in-house testing
Inconvenience to proprietors living outside the immediate area with current in-house testing
Vehicles currently failing on advisory matters with the current in-house testing
Maintains safety standards as all garages would be DVSA approved
Risk of proprietors/drivers being licensed elsewhere if we are less convenient
Difficulty obtaining a test or re-test date with current in-house testing
If you are late for a test, then your test is refused with current in-house testing

The full consultation responses from the trade are detailed in **Appendix B**.

3.4 A number of consultees questioned the costs associated with option 2.

Applicants currently pay for their licence and MOT tests up-front to licensing; the MOT tests are £46 each. If option 2 were chosen by members, then the MOT tests (£96 if tested twice a year) would be deducted from applicant's licence fee; the remainder of the fee goes toward the costs associated with issuing licences and enforcement. Proprietors would instead be required to pay for and obtain an MOT and additional compliance check themselves elsewhere. Legally the most a garage can charge for an MOT is £54.85; Ty Thomas currently charges considerably less than this maximum, however this charge is subject to change.

3.5 One consultee questioned if option 2 was chosen, why the garages would have to be within BCBC. This has been proposed so from an enforcement perspective it is easier to liaise with garages within the borough.

3.6 In consideration of the consultation responses which detail a decline in availability for testing within Ty Thomas, a snapshot analysis report has been carried out which is detailed in **Appendix C**.

This analysis compares September 2025 data, February 2026 data along with March 2026 data and shows there has been a significant decrease in slot availability and details that demand for testing is increasing.

3.7 Ty Thomas Testing Centre has responded to the consultation and advised that they support in-house testing (option 1) and provided the following reasons why it should remain:

- **Consistency of Standards:** Having a single, council-run facility ensures that uniform standards are applied to all vehicles. Allowing multiple private garages introduces a higher risk of variation in how standards are interpreted and applied.
- **Reduced Conflict of Interest:** In-house testing removes the commercial **incentive** that private garages might have to pass vehicles that are not truly up to standard, especially if those garages also perform the necessary repairs.
- **Enhanced Public Confidence:** The public may have greater trust in a testing system that is entirely independent from the trade.
- **Superior Oversight and Auditing:** Direct control allows the Licensing Authority to better monitor trends, such as recurring faults across the fleet. Importantly, the council can immediately issue stop notices for failed vehicles, a process that would be more difficult to manage if testing were outsourced.
- **Rigorous Safety Requirements:** Council officials have argued that taxi tests are "significantly over and above" a standard MOT for a family car and keeping them in-house ensures these enhanced safety and compliance checks are strictly followed.

- 3.8 A request was submitted to determine the costs associated with taxi and private hire testing for Ty Thomas however they advised that whilst they hold cost data for the whole facility and operation, it is not specific to one relatively small area such as taxi testing and are therefore they unable to provide the requested data.
- 3.9 Members are asked to consider the consultation responses contained in this report and determine whether to stay with in-house testing or to allow proprietors to obtain an MOT and compliance test at any approved DVSA garage within BCBC.
- 3.10 If members are minded to open testing to any DVSA approved MOT testing station (within BCBC), then as well as an MOT, it is proposed that the same garage carry out an additional taxi and compliance check. A copy of the proposed compliance check is detailed in **Appendix D** for members' approval should option 2 be chosen. Delegated authority is also requested for officers to make changes to this form.
- 3.11 It is not envisaged that there will be an issue with garages carrying out the additional compliance check; we have seen this in practice with garages in other authorities that do not have in-house testing. Garages may decide to charge for this extra check, or they may include it in the cost of an MOT. It should be noted that if option 2 was chosen by members, a licence would not be issued without applicants submitting both an MOT certificate and additional compliance check.

Licensing Officers will liaise with the garages within BCBC and can provide an update at the meeting.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on

socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There will be financial implications for the authority depending on the option chosen for future provision. A decision to accept any DVSA approved MOT testing station would result in loss of income for the Ty Thomas Joint Vehicle Maintenance Facility.
- 8.2 The loss of income is estimated to be approximately £46,000 which would impact on the Communities Directorate budget. Fleet currently charge £46 per test, and we have around 500 vehicles licensed per year, with mostly 2 tests per year. This figure does not include retests, full retests or tests following stop notices.
- 8.3 There would be no financial implication if members were to choose to stay with in-house testing.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 a) That members consider the content of this report and determine the requirements for future testing provision for taxis and private hire vehicles for Bridgend County Borough Council from the following options:
- i) To retain the current in-house testing regime. This requires proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from Ty Thomas Joint Maintenance Facility along with an additional taxi compliance check.
 - ii) To allow proprietors to obtain an MOT Certificate from any DVSA approved MOT testing station in the County Borough, and that the same testing station undertakes an additional taxi compliance check.
- b) If option ii) is chosen that members approve the taxi compliance test form detailed in **Appendix D** and provide licensing officers with delegated power to make amendments to said test.

- c) If option ii) is chosen, that members provide officers with delegated powers to implement a new system with an implementation date of 1 May 2026 to allow for a smooth transitional period.

Background documents

None.