

# London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee

## Changes to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS) Item No: 18

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**Summary:** Significant changes are being made to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service including renaming, relocation, a new service provider and introduction of new systems and processes that will deliver significant improvements and efficiencies.

**Recommendation:** Members are asked to note the update on the changes to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS) set out in this report and ensure their own authorities are aware and prepared for the changes.

### Background

- 1) As previously reported to the Committee a number of significant changes are being made to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS). This report updates members on each of those changes and the implications for enforcement authorities.

### New Location

- 2) As a result of the imminent termination of the lease for the current premises at Angel Square in Islington, the appeals services will be moving to Chancery Exchange, Furnival Street, near Chancery Lane. The move will take place in the first week of July.

### New Service Provider

- 3) Following an extensive competitive re-tender process last year, the Committee decided to award the contract for the provision of tribunal support services to a new service provider,

Northgate Public Services (NPS). During the last six months London Councils has been working closely with NPS and other key stakeholders, including relevant borough and TfL officers, to develop new and improved systems and processes and ensure a smooth transition when the current contract with Capita ends on the 3rd July 2015. The change in service provider will introduce some significant changes in the way the appeals services work in the future.

### **Online appeals and withdrawal of PATAS pre-printed forms**

- 4) The new systems include the introduction of on-line appeals and the intention is to encourage this method of appealing as more customer friendly, cheaper and simpler for both the tribunals and authorities to work with. This change will, in particular, mean that after 3rd July 2015, London Councils will no longer be supplying pre-printed appeal forms and will provide digital template appeal forms instead. The new appeal forms, which will encourage people to submit their appeal online, will have to be printed by each enforcement authority and provided with their Notice of Rejection. This will also enable enforcement authorities to communicate with appellants electronically where possible.

### **Unique Verification Code**

- 5) The move to online appeals will also require the introduction of a unique verification code for every appeal. Detailed specifications for this new code have been developed through consultation with a special interest group of enforcement authorities and discussions with relevant borough software providers. It is extremely important that every enforcement authority is ready to issue the required verification code with every Notice of Rejection and its accompanying appeal form from 3rd July 2015.

### **Electronic Transfer of Appeals Documentation**

- 6) A key requirement for the new service provider has been to minimise the transfer of hard copy information to increase efficiency and reduce costs e.g. forms, evidence, correspondence etc. From July, all transfer of documentation from the appeals services to enforcement authorities will be in electronic format, either by email or via the newly developed online portal. NPS is working closely with all authorities to ensure two-way electronic transfer of documents (fully automated where possible) will be implemented by the end of 2015. This means that all authorities will be transferring appeals evidence and correspondence electronically within six months of the introduction of the new system this July.

### **Name Change**

- 7) With the increasing range of appeals considered by the adjudicators, the name 'Parking and Traffic Appeals Service' is no longer fully descriptive of the tribunal's range of activities. As almost all stationery will need to be changed to cope with the new service provider and building signs need to be changed because of the move, the adjudicators saw this as a good opportunity to rebrand the tribunals at minimal cost. In April this year under the urgency procedure, TEC Members were consulted on a proposal to rebrand the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS). The following changes were agreed to take effect from July 2015:
- 8) For public facing activities the old single service name will no longer be used but, instead, the two tribunals will use their own terminology:

- Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA) - the new name of the parking and traffic adjudicators who deal with appeals against parking, moving traffic, bus lanes, littering, waste receptacles and lorry control enforcement
  - Road User Charging Adjudicators (RUCA) – who will continue to cover Congestion Charging and Low Emission Zone appeals
- 9) If there is a need to refer to the two tribunals collectively, they will be known as the London Tribunals, while the administrative support team for the tribunals, who work flexibly between the two tribunals, as needed, will be known as the London Tribunals Support Service. Enforcement authorities are being advised to ensure that all references to the tribunals on their websites and other literature and correspondence, is amended for the 3<sup>rd</sup> July to reflect the new names.

### **Legal implications**

- 10) None.

### **Financial implications**

- 11) The cost of the move of the appeals hearing centre from Angel Square to Chancery Lane is estimated to cost £1.1 million, which is within the budgeted estimate of between £1 million and £1.5 million approved by the TEC Executive Sub-Committee in July 2014. The estimated cost savings anticipated to be delivered as a result of the change of service provider for tribunal support services was included in the 2015/16 revenue budget agreed by the Committee in December 2014. The cost of the rebranding exercise is estimated to be £6,000, as explained in the urgency report (also attached to this agenda), which can be met from existing resources.

### **Equalities Implications**

- 12) None. Although electronic and online processes and communication is being enabled and encouraged, the ability to use postal processes will remain as well as the ability to attend a personal hearing.