

# LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

## Amendment to the Rules and Regulations and Procedures for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing - New Driver Training – Change of Provider 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018

### Report of Principal Licensing Officer

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report is to seek Members' approval of proposals to introduce new training arrangements for all new applicants for hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences, switching college provider to Lancaster and Morecambe College.

Members are also asked to assess the current application procedure and consider removing the requirement that new applicants for a private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence pass a locally set knowledge test, incorporating this with the new driver training course.

**This report is public.**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Members are recommended to approve a new requirement that all applicants for the grant of a hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licence attain a btech Level 2 Certificate in the introduction to the role of the professional taxi and private hire driver as part of the application procedure. This would take effect from the first scheduled course date (24-27<sup>th</sup> April 2018).**
- 2. Member are also asked to consider removing the requirement that applicants for the grant of a hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licence pass the locally set knowledge test as a separate test. The content contained in the knowledge test would be incorporated as a unit within the proposed btech qualification.**
- 3. Should members decide to maintain the knowledge test as a separate assessment outside the proposed btech qualification, it is recommended that the application criteria is amended to require an applicant to wait 6 months from applying again should they fail the knowledge test 3 times. There is no restriction in place at present and there are examples of applicants failing the test numerous times.**

**4. Subject to the above recommendations, to make appropriate to the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing document.**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Licensing team has been approached by Lancaster and Morecambe College, offering to re-introduce the taxi training qualification. A subsequent meeting held between Council Officers and College Staff to discuss the arrangements was positive and constructive. The college wishes to re-introduce a recognised hackney carriage and private hire qualification which can be provided locally and is happy to develop a bespoke training syllabus appropriate to local need.
- 1.2 The current arrangement for training of new applicants for a hackney carriage or private hire is provided by Blackpool and Fylde College. The qualification obtained is City and Guilds Level 2: "Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire driver". The current cost of the Blackpool and Fylde course is £235.00. The content and delivery is comparable to the proposed alternative provider.
- 1.3 Currently, new applicants whose application has been granted are then given 1 year to complete the training.
- 1.4 The knowledge test for all new drivers is a separate test that all new drivers must successfully complete as part of their licence application. The knowledge test is delivered and administered by the Licensing team.
- 1.5 The current arrangement has been in place for over 3 years. Prior to the move to Blackpool and Fylde College, the training was provided by Lancaster and Morecambe College. However, the Council was informed that the college was increasing its fees significantly and a decision was taken at the Licensing Regulatory Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to switch training provider to Blackpool and Fylde College. The Council is not under any contractual obligations with either college for delivery of this training.

**2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 It is proposed that Lancaster and Morecambe College be invited to deliver a 4 day btech Level 2 Certificate in the Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver, incorporating the knowledge test. This would become part of the new application process and would need to be successfully completed before a licence would be granted.

The cost for the training would be a one-off cost to the applicant of £225.00. Lancaster and Morecambe College have provided a 3 year commitment to run the course and maintain it at this figure, subject to annual inflationary increases only.

The course will incorporate key elements of becoming a Lancaster professional licensed taxi driver.

The 10 modules studied by the driver would be as follows.

Unit 1: Health and safety in the taxi and private hire work environment

Unit 2: Road safety when driving passengers in a taxi or private hire vehicle

Unit 3: Professional customer service in the taxi and private hire industry  
Unit 4: Taxi and private hire vehicle maintenance and safety inspections  
Unit 5: The regulatory framework of the taxi and private hire industry  
Unit 6: Taxi and private hire services for passengers who require assistance  
Unit 7: Routes and fares in the taxi and private hire vehicle industries  
Unit 8: Transporting of parcels, luggage and other items in the taxi and private hire industries  
Unit 9: Transporting of children and young persons by taxi or private hire vehicle  
Unit 10: Tailor-made by Lancaster City Council to include Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) training/local knowledge/rules and regulations

- 2.2 Upon enrolment applicants would be required to sit a pre-course numeracy/literacy online assessment; this will assist college tutors in supporting applicants at the appropriate level; it may be determined from this assessment that an individual's level of learning requires improvement and an access course to develop the applicant's English may be recommended in the first instance. It will also reduce the number of re-sits required by applicants per unit test.
- 2.3 The content of unit 10 has been developed by Council Officers to include licence rules and regulations, local knowledge and CSE training. It is believed that this approach will be much more effective and useful than current arrangements.
- 2.4 Currently the knowledge test can be taken as many times as required by the applicant to pass and costs the individual £20 per re-sit. There is currently no limit on the number of times an applicant may re-sit the test, and the re-sit fee would be charged each time. If members decide to continue with the current knowledge test, it is recommended that a limit be placed on the number of re-sits an applicant may take.
- 2.5 The advantages of swapping training provider to Lancaster and Morecambe College would be:-
- Less travelling for new applicants
  - Supporting a local college
  - Opportunity to develop a bespoke training package
  - Incorporate the knowledge test
  - Consistent and assured level of training
- 2.6 Janet Boardman, Business Development Manager from Lancaster and Morecambe College has been invited to today's meeting to answer any specific questions from members regarding the course programme, its content and delivery.

### **3.0 Council Policy and Legislation**

- 3.1 Section 51 and 59 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provide that a Council shall not grant a licence unless satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a private hire /hackney carriage driver's licence.
- 3.2 The requirement that new applicants for a private hire or hackney carriage licence undertake a recognised qualification forms part of the criteria used to determine an applicant's suitability to hold the position of licensed driver in Lancaster; wearing the Council's seal of approval.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider the proposal to change the provider of the new taxi driver training, and to agree the new training arrangements developed jointly with Lancaster and Morecambe College, including the changes to the Knowledge test as outlined.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

The primary purpose of the Licensing regime is to ensure public safety.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of the course, learning materials and delivery is met by the applicant. Depending on the number of new driver applications there would be a loss of income of around £1,000 per annum (based on 50 tests) if we ceased to provide the knowledge test and this would need to be built into future years' budgets as part of the budget process.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Legal have no further comments.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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