

LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Training for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers 5th June 2014

Report of Licensing Manager

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.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to approve that with immediate effect a new condition be attached to applications for the grant of hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences requiring applicants to attain an NVQ Level 2 in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire before the first annual renewal of their licence.

1.0 Report

- 1.1 As members will be aware, at a meeting of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held in April 2014 an urgent report was considered in relation to new driver training.
- 1.2 Members approved a recommendation from officers that the requirement for all new applicants for a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence to complete a BTEC course 'Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire' or hold an equivalent qualification be removed.
- 1.3 It was reported that since September 2008 it had been a prerequisite that all new applicants for a hackney carriage and private driver's licence must pass the BTEC course in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire before the grant of a licence.
- 1.4 Members were informed that the cost of the course when introduced was £198; in fact it had remained at that price since that time although negotiations did take place with the college approximately 2 years ago when they considered increasing the cost to just over £300.
- 1.5 Members will recall that recently an applicant had contacted the licensing department and told them that the cost of the course was now £675. This was then confirmed by the college after being contacted by licensing officers. There had been no prior warning of this increase in cost.

- 1.6 Members considered it too onerous on new applicants to have to pay the large sum of money in order to attain the qualification, and agreed that the condition should be removed with the proviso that licensing officers source some other form of training to replace the BTEC.
- 1.7 Officers can now report that they have been in contact with a company called GKC Training who can offer an NVQ Level 2 in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire free of charge to all applicants. Blackpool College can also offer the NVQ free of charge at the moment. Lancaster and Morecambe College have also indicated that they may be able to offer the NVQ.

The course programme includes: -

- Ensuring the health & safety of the taxi and private hire driver and passengers
 - Driving a taxi or private hire vehicle in a professional manner
 - Providing professional customer services in the taxi and private hire industries
 - Providing a safe and legal vehicle for transporting passengers by taxi and/or private hire
 - Carriage of luggage and parcels by taxi and private hire
 - Plan routes in the taxi and private hire industries
 - Transporting children and young persons by taxi, private hire or chauffeuring
 - Provide a transport service in the taxi and private hire industries for people who require assistance
 - Provide a service to customers using a wheelchair in an accessible taxi or private hire vehicle
- 1.8 The course will be delivered in the working environment and drivers will be assessed accordingly throughout the programme. There will be up to 15 hours classroom work required.
- 1.9 GKC have assured the licensing manager that the funding will be available for the foreseeable future to provide the course free of charge although it is difficult to say with any certainty whether this is the case. Blackpool College have confirmed that funding is available at least until August and after August they will know if there is further funding. In any case if the proposal is accepted and the funding be removed at some time in the future making the course too expensive, officers would report back to this Committee so that the matter can be reconsidered.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the proposal requiring with immediate effect all new applicants for a hackney carriage and private hire drivers licence to complete an NVQ Level 2 in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire before the first annual renewal of their licence.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

None applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comment.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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