

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	1 st June 2018
Report Author	Paul Lewis
Service Area	Trading Standards, Licensing and Transport
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	27 th June 2018

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Taxi Licensing – Application Policy

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 On the 20th September 2017 The Planning, Licensing and Regulatory committee agreed for a public consultation exercise be undertaken with a view to the amendment of the Taxi Licensing Application Process to introduce a requirement for a knowledge test for new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.
- 1.2 At this committee amendments were approved to the existing policy regarding the replacement of the now unavailable Driving Standards Agency advanced test with a similar assessment provided by Blue Lamp Trust and clarification that vehicle renewal applications and MOT tests can be renewed no sooner than 28 days before the expiry of existing licence
- 1.3 A consultation exercise on the introduction of a knowledge test was conducted with 12 of 17 respondents agreeing to the introduction of a test, 4 respondents disagreeing with a test and one respondent undecided.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Council approve that the Taxi Licensing Application Policy be amended with the introduction of a knowledge test and changes as outlined in 1.2 and this be put to full Council for approval

- 2.2 That delegated Authority is given to the Trading Standards, Licensing and Transport Manager to review the knowledge test and update, as appropriate, where changes to legislation and best practice arise and review current fees in conjunction with Tydfil Training.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members may be aware that the Authority has taken a wide ranging Safeguarding Review following the Casey report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham and in October 2015 a new Taxi Licence Application Policy was approved.
- 3.2 Following member feedback a review of the Policy has been undertaken and it was proposed that a Knowledge Test is introduced for all new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver applicants. Grandfather rights will be given to existing licence holders however the requirement to undertake the test can be implemented by Licensing Sub Committee under a licence review.
- 3.3 On the 20th September 2017 the Planning, Licensing and Regulatory committee resolved that a public consultation exercise would be conducted with a view to a change to the application policy to introduce a Knowledge Test. Committee also approved changes be made to the existing policy for a change to the provider of the advanced driving test and clarification that vehicle renewals and MOT's can be made no sooner than 28 days prior to the expiry of the existing licence.
- 3.4 In relation to the introduction of the knowledge test a 28 day consultation period was held. The consultation was advertised at Public buildings and via social media. A total of 17 responses were received with 12 people agreeing to the introduction, four disagreeing and one respondent undecided.
- 3.5 Since the end of the consultation the Department has examined Knowledge Test's carried out by other Authorities in order to achieve a test that met best practice.
- 3.6 Meetings have been held with Tydfil Training who has proposed that they will carry out the test on behalf of the Authority. It is proposed the test will include specific elements to include literacy, numeracy, safeguarding, laws around taxi driving plus local knowledge of the Authority. An oral skills test will also be introduced.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 4.1 A proposed cost of £45 for the test has been agreed which will include a free retest. Payment will be made by the applicant to Tydfil Training so there will be no financial impact for the Authority for the test.
- 4.2 There is a potential for loss of income from applicants who are not based in Merthyr Tydfil who apply for Merthyr Tydfil licences but work in other local authority.

5.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council's website/intranet via the 'Equality Impact Assessment' link.

**ALYN OWEN
CHIEF OFFICER
COMMUNITY REGENERATION**

**CLLR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Proposed Taxi Licensing Application Policy		Attached
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		Yes