

**LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

11th March 2013

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE – DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor Phil Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management and Councillor Rebecca Blake, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holders Consulted	No
Relevant Heads of Service	Head of Regulatory Services.
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To provide an update to the committee on work which has been undertaken by licensing officers in identifying a suitable training provider to administer disability awareness training on behalf of Redditch Borough Council to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and to request that consultation is undertaken with the Redditch Taxi Trade on the introduction of Disability Awareness training.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **The contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) **Officers undertake a 12 week Consultation with the Redditch Taxi Trade on the proposal to make disability awareness training a requirement for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers in the Borough.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 It is estimated that the disability awareness training for drivers will cost £20.00 per person. Fees charged for the training will be paid directly to Driver Training at Worcestershire County Council.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Local Government (Misc. Provisions) Act 1976 Section 51 allows a District Council to attach to the grant of a licence any conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary or have a Policy requiring criteria to be met before granting a driver's licence.

- 3.3 Any requirement within a Policy must be lawful and reasonable otherwise the Policy could be subject to Judicial Review.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 On the 17th December 2012 members received a detailed referral report in relation to the finding of the "Access for Disabled People Task Group". One of the recommendations of the report was that Redditch Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers should be offered suitable disability awareness training to assist them in carrying out their role. It was further highlighted in the report that any training offered either by or on behalf Redditch BC should not be mandatory, as companies may struggle to pay for their drivers to participate in the training.
- 3.5 However, officers consider that unless disability awareness training is mandatory, it is unlikely that drivers will voluntarily undertake this training and across the county it is becoming the norm for such training to be mandatory. The cost of £20 per person is considered to be a reasonable cost and not prohibitive or likely to cause difficulty for drivers.
- 3.6 Since the meeting on the 17th December 2012 enquiries have been made by licensing officers with local training providers, Redditch and Bromsgrove College and Driver Training based at Worcestershire County Council in order to identify the most appropriate and cost effective training course available.
- 3.7 From the information gathered from the training providers contacted it was established that the Driver Training based at Worcestershire County Council could undertake the Disability Awareness Training on behalf of Redditch Borough Council in the most efficient, convenient and cost effective manner to both the drivers and the Local Authority. It is acknowledged that the College could not provide this training.
- 3.8 The training is designed to give Redditch Taxi drivers the knowledge and skills needed to transport any customers who may have a disability both safely and confidently. It will further ensure compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Redditch Borough Councils Hackney and Private Hire conditions of licence.
- 3.9 The attendee's will receive a certificate of attendance and the training will provide an understanding of:
- Wheelchair user as a passenger
 - The use of ramps
 - How to use ramps or tail lift
 - How to handle a manual wheelchair up the ramp
 - How to handle a wheelchair on and off the kerb
 - All types of Assistance Dogs

- 3.10 Other Licensing Authorities across the County have a mandatory requirement of some form of disability awareness training: Driver Training at Worcester County Council currently provides this training for drivers in Worcester. Wychavon District Council is currently consulting with the trade within Wychavon about this particular training course. Bromsgrove District Council demands an NVQ in passenger transport before granting a licence.
- 3.11 The actions proposed in the recommendations may constitute a change to licensing policy in the Borough. Any changes within the licensing regime require consultation to be undertaken over a twelve week period. All interested parties would need to be consulted during this period including: taxi drivers, vehicle owners, taxi operator, West Mercia Police and groups representing people with disabilities.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 The Equality Act 2010 focused on the needs of people with protected characteristics, which includes disabilities. Public bodies, including local authorities, have a lawful duty of regard to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The findings and actions detailed in the Access for Disabled People Task Group report should enable Redditch Borough Council to pay due regard to the needs of people with disabilities living in the Borough in line with these legislative requirements.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Redditch Borough Council has a duty to consult with and consider all responses received from the Taxi Trade or other interested parties during the 12 week consultation period.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Licensing Committee report - 17th December 2012 - Access for Disabled People Task Group – Referral Report.

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AUTHOR OF REPORT

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