

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 Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are asked to approve new Policies to implement the proposal to introduce mandatory disability awareness training for those that they licence to drive Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE:**

To adopt the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing Policies attached at Appendix 1.

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 they may consider reasonably necessary or to have a Policy requiring certain 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 Borough Council should not be mandatory, as companies may struggle to pay for their drivers to participate in the training.
- 3.5 However, officers believed that, unless disability awareness training was mandatory, it was unlikely that drivers will voluntarily undertake this training and, across the county, it is becoming the norm for such training to be mandatory. The anticipated cost of £20 per person was considered to be a reasonable cost and not prohibitive or likely to cause difficulty for drivers.
- 3.6 On 11th March 2013 the Licensing Committee considered a report on this topic and resolved that officers undertake a 12 week consultation with the Redditch taxi trade on the proposal to make disability awareness training a mandatory requirement for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers in the Borough.
- 3.7 On 1st July 2013 the Licensing Committee considered the responses received during the consultation and resolved to proceed with the proposal to make disability awareness training a mandatory requirement for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers in the Borough, excepting those drivers who can demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that they have undertaken equivalent disability awareness training (e.g. Level 2 NVQ in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving).
- 3.8 To implement this requirement, it is necessary to amend the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing Policy. A draft policy that incorporates the mandatory requirement for disability awareness training is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.9 This policy provides that new applicants must undertake the required training before they are granted a licence to drive Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire Vehicles.
- 3.10 In relation to existing licensed drivers, the policy provides that licences will not be renewed after 1st July 2014 unless the licence holder has undertaken the required training.

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- 3.11 Further discussions have also taken place since July 2013 with the proposed training provider, Worcestershire County Council.
- 3.12 Members are reminded that the training will cost £20 per delegate and 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 Council's Hackney and Private Hire conditions of licence.
- 3.13 The attendees 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
- 3.14 It is intended that courses will take place every three weeks at the Town Hall on Wednesdays. Each course will be open to approximately 15 delegates. It is anticipated that 3 courses can be offered per day as follows:
- 10:00am – 12:30pm
 - 1:00pm – 3:30pm
 - 4pm – 6.30pm
- 3.15 There are around 430 existing licensed drivers. Not all of these will necessarily need to undertake the training, if they can demonstrate that they have already undertaken equivalent disability awareness training (e.g. Level 2 NVQ in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving).
- 3.16 If the policy at Appendix 1 is approved, courses will commence in January 2014. Therefore driver's whose licences will expire shortly after 1st July 2014 will be given a reasonable opportunity to undertake the required training in plenty of time before they have to renew their licences.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.17 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 None

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Policy

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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