

**LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

5th March 2018

**FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF RECENT AMENDMENTS MADE TO
HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENSING POLICY**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Wilkes – Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

On the 6th November 2017, the Licensing Committee resolved to approve a revised policy for the licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. The revised policy introduced new requirements in relation to driver training and testing.

At a recent Taxi Liaison Forum, Members present agreed to give further consideration to the introduction of these new requirements following representations made by licensed drivers at the Forum.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members give further consideration to the additional requirements introduced in the Council’s Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licensing Policy and RESOLVE whether or not to make any further amendments to this Policy.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Any costs incurred in making further amendments to the Policy would need to be met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council has an adopted Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licensing Policy that can be amended following consultation and proper consideration. The Policy has been amended to reflect the new

requirements for driver testing and training. Any further amendment will require a period of consultation and consideration prior to the amendment being implemented.

- 3.4 Members are reminded that the primary consideration in Licensing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers is the safety of the travelling public and that the Policy that governs this should reflect that. However, the Policy should have regard to those who are to be licensed and be implemented in a fair and reasonable way.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 On the 6th November 2017, the Licensing Committee resolved to approve a revised policy for the licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers with effect on 1st December 2017. This revised Policy can be seen at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.6 The revised Policy introduced a new requirement that licensed drivers undertake disability awareness training and driving standards assessments every three years. Prior to the revised Policy taking effect, drivers only needed to undertake such training on one occasion – when they first became licensed.
- 3.7 These new requirements were originally recommended to be introduced into Policy by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Improving Disabled People's Access to Redditch Taxi Fleet Task Group.
- 3.8 This Task Group prepared a report that was presented to the Licensing Committee in July 2016 and contained a number of recommendations aimed at improving access for disabled people in Redditch to licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles.
- 3.9 The Licensing Committee resolved to approve the recommendations of the Task Group, subject to the carrying out of suitable consultation on those recommendations that required the Council to amend its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policies in order to implement.
- 3.10 Consultation on those recommendations, including the recommendation to require licensed drivers to undertake refresher training in disability awareness and driving standards every three years, took place between early October 2016 and the end of December 2016.
- 3.11 During the consultation exercise, twenty two consultation surveys were returned and a submission was also received from the Redditch Taxi Association (RTA). A table setting out a summary of the survey

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responses received during the consultation exercise is attached at **Appendix 2**. The submission received from the RTA can be seen at **Appendix 3**.

- 3.12 The Licensing Committee gave consideration to all of the consultation responses received in March 2017 and again in July 2017 before finally resolving to approve a revised policy on 6th November 2017.
- 3.13 Since the decision taken on 6th November 2017, some Members have been contacted by licensed drivers concerned by the new requirements in relation to driver training. Furthermore, at a Taxi and Private Hire Liaison Forum held on 31st January 2018, over 100 licensed drivers attended and strongly expressed similar concerns.
- 3.14 The concerns that continue to be raised are that the new requirements introduce a disproportionate and unjustified burden on licensed drivers. The licensed drivers appeared to express the view that additional training and tests should only be required of drivers that have been the subject of a relevant complaint against them that has been upheld.
- 3.15 Representatives of the Redditch Taxi Association (RTA) expressed the view that they felt insufficient regard had been had to the response that they submitted to the consultation on behalf of their membership (**Appendix 3**).
- 3.16 In light of the strength of feeling that was clear to those elected Members present at the Taxi and Private Hire Liaison Forum, the Chairman of the Licensing Committee agreed that Members would give the matter further consideration at the next Licensing Committee.
- 3.17 Members are therefore asked to give this matter further consideration and resolve whether or not they wish to make any further amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy shown at **Appendix 1**.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 None

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licensing Policy

Appendix 2 Responses received during the Consultation

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Appendix 3 Redditch Taxi Association Response to the
Consultation

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