

LICENSING COMMITTEE

(NON LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)

Agenda Item 7

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Driver Training*
Date of Meeting: **25 June 2009**
Report of: *Director of Environment*
Contact Officer: Name: **Martin Seymour** Tel: **29-6659**
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 All new hackney carriage / private hire drivers are required to undertake training (see 3.2 below). Officers have identified a Level 2 BTEC Award in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire which would provide accredited training and a recognised qualification for drivers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 All prospective hackney carriage/ private hire driver applicants shall be required to hold Level 2 BTEC Award in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire before licensing, from a date agreed by the Director of Environment.
- 2.2 That the power to approve the training provider is delegated to the Director of Environment.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Under sections 51 & 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 licensing authorities are required to ensure that persons issued licences are "fit & proper".
- 3.2 In ensuring the fitness of persons applying for an initial new hackney / private hire drivers licences the authority requires that they undertake:
- A medical examination.
 - A CRB criminal background check.
 - A Driving Standards Agency taxi driving test.
 - A two part oral street knowledge test.
 - A practical route test.
 - Attend Equalities and Disabilities Awareness Training.
 - Attend Customer Care Training.

- h) Meet a required level of literacy set by the council.
- 3.3 Currently all new drivers must attend Equalities and Disabilities training provided by The Council which has been introduced following recommendations from the Social Justice Consultation Forum (ESJCF). The course involves prospective drivers knowing how to interact with people with disabilities, including helping them in and out of wheelchair accessible taxis. Ethnic minority awareness is intended to promote racial harmony and equality. New drivers are also required to attend a Customer Care Course provided by the council which not only gives drivers the level of customer service expected of them but also how to keep themselves safe while working in a possibly dangerous environment. Adult Skills and Learning also assess driver's literacy at the customer care course and provide assistance in reaching the required level of literacy if required.
- 3.4 The Level 2 BTEC Award Transporting Passengers by Hackney Carriage & Private Hire is designed to support and enhance the knowledge of existing or prospective drivers who wish to develop or begin a career in transporting passengers. It will provide career opportunities for persons seeking a career in driving a passenger transport vehicle, employed passenger transport drivers who will undertake this qualification as part of their continuing professional development and existing passenger transport drivers who wish to return to the industry after an absence and require their qualifications to be updated.
- 3.5 The Level 2 BTEC Award has been developed to provide a consistent standard across the whole Taxi industry and provide hackney carriage and private hire drivers with a meaningful and professional qualification.
- 3.6 The BTEC course is a Vocational Related Qualification based on a knowledge-based programme assessed by a multiple-choice test within each of the modules. It is comprised of seven modules which are:
- Customer Service for Passenger Transport
 - Equality & Diversity in Passenger Transport
 - Passenger Transport & Disability Awareness
 - Transporting Passengers Safely
 - Carriage of Luggage and Parcels by Taxi & Private Hire
 - Map Reading & Route Planning
 - Taxi & Private Hire Regulations (UK)
- 3.7 The award is delivered in a way that suits the individual and will consist of classroom teaching, open learning and distance learning or a combination of these. These would replace the courses & literacy assessments provided by the council.
- 3.8 An NVQ in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving is also available to existing drivers on a voluntary basis.

3.9 The BTEC and the NVQ courses are currently available at no cost to applicants through government funding. The rules on this funding have recently relaxed and allow applicants to apply for training even if they have received funding in other vocational fields. Most providers are able to fund a percentage of applicants that are not able to access government funding for whatever reason.

4. CONSULTATION:

4.1 This matter has been discussed at the council's hackney carriage and private hire consultation forum where all members of that forum are free to express their opinions. Forum members are all supportive of these requirements for new applicants.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for the council from endorsing the Level 2 BTEC Award since the courses are funded by government.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw

Date: 15/05/09

5.2 Legal Implications:

Section 47 of the Local Authority (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 gives the council a discretionary power to attach to the grant of a licence of a hackney carriage such conditions as it considers reasonably necessary. Any person aggrieved by any conditions attached to such a licence may appeal to a magistrates court.

Lawyer Consulted: Rebecca Sidell

Date: 01/06/09

5.3 Equalities Implications:

As a service provider, the council provides high quality services to meet diverse needs of Brighton and Hove residents. Equally accessible to all, it also uses its influence with partners to further the principals beyond its own operation.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

The role of the taxi trade is included in the Local Transport Plan, which identifies it as a key element in providing sustainable transport choices. It creates important links in the transport network to other forms of sustainable transport providing a seamless connection. It will contribute to three of the government's four shared transport priorities – reducing congestion, improving air quality and accessibility. Use of taxis for school transport, licensed vehicles using bus lanes, locating ranks at railway stations and the city coach station, approved use of liquid petroleum gas all contribute to reducing congestion and moving passengers quickly.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Sufficient late night transport to reduce public place violent crime is recognised in the community safety, crime reduction and drugs strategy. The presence of CCTV can be an important means of deterring and detecting crime.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Having well trained, professional drivers protects the council and the city's reputation and the visitor economy.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Tourism needs to provide a warm welcome to visitors and the tourism strategy depends upon effective partnership with transport operators particularly to achieve safe late night dispersal for the nighttime economy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None.

Documents In Members' Rooms:

None.

Background Documents:

None.