

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE
3RD FEBRUARY 2014

Submitted by: **Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships**

Purpose

To inform the Committee of the responses to a Consultation with the members of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fraternity regarding driver training.

Recommendation

That as from 1st October 2015 anyone who holds either a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage drivers licence shall have obtained a relevant qualification, the minimum qualification being either a BTec for private hire and hackney carriage drivers or alternatively the Driving Standards Agency taxi test which incorporates wheelchair training. As from the 1st March 2014 any licences renewed to those without such a qualification will expire on the 1st October 2015. These licences will then be extended to the full 3 years on production of a relevant qualification.

1. Background

1.1 Members will recall at their meeting on 5th September 2013 resolving to undertake a Consultation exercise with all Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers concerning driver training, and how and when it should be phased into the Council's licensing policy and procedures. A copy of the report is appended at page 81, members attention is drawn to the reasons for the proposal as set out in paragraphs 1.3 to 1.6.

To enable the consultation everyone who holds a current Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers licence was written to. This was in excess of 600 letters. There have been 59 responses.

The proposals and responses are as follows:

(a) By the 1st October 2015 to have obtained a relevant qualification being either a BTech for private hire and hackney carriage drivers or to have taken and passed the Driving Standards Agency taxi test, which incorporates wheelchair training – any renewed licences issues between 1st October 2013 and 1st October 2015 will be extended to the 3 year maximum on production of a relevant qualification.

This proposal had 42 positive responses.

(b) Regardless of the expiry date of a licence that on renewal the applicant must hold a qualification.

This proposal had 15 positive responses.

One letter was received where both proposals had been selected and a further letter was returned which had no proposal selected. However, the sender had written his views about the matter on the reverse of the letter. The views expressed were that some people did not need any training.

All the responses that had the sender's views on the matter can be seen at Appendix 7.

2. **Issues**

2.1 At present only anecdotal evidence is available indicating how many current licence holders have any relevant qualification. It is estimated that at least 70% hold either an NVQ or B.Tech.

3. **Options**

The Committee can resolve to:

- (i) Choose Option (a)
- (ii) Choose option (b).
- (iii) Choose neither option.
- (iv) Defer making a decision until a future date.

4. **Proposal**

That the committee resolve to adopt option (a) whereby :- by the 1st October 2015 everyone who holds a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage drivers licence shall have obtained a relevant qualification, the minimum qualification being either a B.Tech for private hire and hackney carriage drivers or alternatively to have passed the Driving Standards agency taxi test which incorporates wheelchair training. Should the proposal be accepted, licences renewed to those without a qualification will expire on the 1st October 2015. These licences will then be extended to the full 3 years on production of a relevant qualification.

5. **Recommendation**

That the committee adopt the proposal.

6. **Decision Required**

What action do you wish to take?

7. **Human Rights**

Article 6(1) guarantees an applicant a fair hearing.
Article 14 guarantees no discrimination.

8. **Reasons for the Preferred Solution**

To ensure the Council continue to review its policies and procedures.

9. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

There are none

10. Background Papers

See appendices