

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2022
title: HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE KNOWLEDGE TEST
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: STEPHEN BARKER, SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of proposed revision of the knowledge test undertaken by prospective Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives }
 - Corporate Priorities }
 - Other Considerations }
- The Council aims to be a well-managed authority supporting residents and local business in providing a quality service.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 For many years the Council has used a knowledge test as part of its assessment of whether an applicant for a private hire or hackney carriage licence is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

2.2 The existing knowledge test requires applicants to answer a series of questions on routes in Clitheroe and/or Longridge and rural routes. Applicants must describe particular routes by naming each and every road involved in traveling between identified locations by the most efficient route. This includes A and B road numbers in rural locations. The applicant is also required to answer questions on where a particular landmark is situated; hackney carriage bylaws and the highway code. The applicant has to achieve a minimum number of points on each page of the test.

2.3 An applicant is allowed to re-sit a test if unsuccessful on four occasions but if they continue to be unsuccessful, they are debarred from further attempts for one year.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The knowledge test remains an important part of assessing whether an applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence and ensures that the public can have confidence that a licenced driver will know the area and take the most efficient route. However, the way in which the current test is set and marked, requires full details of the route and so whilst a driver may correctly identify the most appropriate route, if they miss a part of it in their description, they are not awarded the marks.

3.2 The purpose of the test is to ensure that applicants have the required knowledge and not that they are able to list this information, as such it is proposed that the knowledge test be amended so that it includes multiple choice questions to applicants inviting them to select which of three routes is the shortest between two identified locations. In order to identify this, they would require the same knowledge as they do presently.

3.4 It is also proposed that rather than requiring applicants to score a minimum figure on each page of the test, a minimum overall score should be achieved. It is considered that such steps will still require demonstration of a minimum standard of local knowledge, whilst not discouraging applicant's from applying.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources } – Resources will be expended in reformulating the revised knowledge test
- Technical, Environmental and Legal } - Retaining the knowledge test is an important factor in assessing whether an applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence
- Political } - None
- Reputation } – Having a robust procedures to assessment and applicant's fitness to hold a licence enhances the reputation of the authority.
- Equality & Diversity } – The Council will ensure that any reasonable adjustments to these procedures are made where required.

4 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE:**

4.1 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to revise the knowledge tests as set out above.

STEPHEN BARKER
SOLICITOR

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Stephen Barker, extension 3216.