

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:-

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE LICENSING & REGULATORY PANEL

Date of Meeting:-

5th December 2001

Agenda Item No:-

A.6

Public	Operational	Delegated Yes

Accompanying Comments and Statements

	Required	Included
Cumbria Fire Service	No	No
Cumbria Constabulary	No	No
Environmental Services	No	No
Corporate Planning & Information Unit	No	No

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS –LOCAL KNOWLEDGE TEST

Title:-

Report of:-

CITY SOLICITOR AND SECRETARY

Report reference:-

TC. 240/01

Summary:-

On 6th February 2001, this panel approved driving and local knowledge tests for new Hackney and Private Hire drivers. With regard to Private Hire drivers, the local knowledge test is now considered unnecessary and the panel is asked to reconsider their decision of 6th February.

Recommendation:-

The Licensing Officers consider that the geographical element of the Local Knowledge test is not necessary for Private Hire drivers for the reasons outlined in the report and that there is only a requirement to take the driver conditions element. Members to reach a decision after hearing the presentation and discussing the options available.

J M Egan

City Solicitor and Secretary

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:- Nil

To the Chairman and Members of The Licensing & Regulatory Panel
on 5th December 2001

On 6th February 2001, the Licensing Panel heard presentations on proposed driving and local knowledge tests for Hackney and Private Hire drivers. It was resolved inter alia:

" The Licensing Officer be authorised to undertake local knowledge tests of not more than 30 minutes duration at no additional cost"

A local knowledge test was devised that consists of three parts:

- Location of important premises (e.g. Cumberland Infirmary, Cumbria College of Art & Design)
- Shortest route between two locations (e.g. Carlisle Railway Station to Northumbria University Halls of Residence)
- Conditions of the Hackney/Private Hire driving licence

The scheme has been working for nearly six months and it is apparent that Private Hire drivers do not need such a detailed knowledge of the area as Hackney Carriage drivers do. The reasons are:

- All private hire bookings are in advance and give the driver sufficient time to check locations if he is unsure. (Hackney drivers pick up many passengers cold from the rank or street)
- Approximately a third of all private hire drivers are involved in contract work only, using the same routes every day.
- Many of this third are involved in school contracts only, an example being a three person business near Roadhead servicing the school contracts in that area. That is the only private hire work they carry out.

The Taxi Associations have been consulted verbally and both express the feeling that local knowledge tests in respect of Private Hire drivers should be reconsidered.

The third part of the test involves questions on the conditions relating to Private Hire driving licences and I would suggest that this part should be retained.

OPTIONS

1. To reject the proposal
2. To resolve that a local knowledge test for Private Hire drivers be restricted to questions on the conditions of their licence only