

Carlisle City Council

Report to:-	THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE LICENSING AND REGULATORY PANEL		
Date of Meeting:-	6 th February 2002	Agenda Item No:-	
Public	Operational	Delegated Yes	
Accompanying Comments and Statements		Required	Included
Cumbria Fire Service		No	No
Cumbria Constabulary		No	No
Environmental Services		No	No
Title:-	DRIVING STANDARDS AGENCY "TAXI TEST" UPDATE		
Report of:-	CITY SOLICITOR AND SECRETARY.		
Report reference:-	TC. 011/02		

Summary:-

On 13th March 2001 the Environment Committee approved a recommendation from the Licensing Panel that all new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver's be required to undertake a Driving Standards Agency "Taxi" test. The Panel requested an update after the scheme had been in operation for six months.

Recommendation:-

That the Licensing & Regulatory Panel note the contents of the report.

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:-

To the Chairman and Members of the Licensing and Regulatory Panel 6th February 2002

On 6th February 2001, the Licensing Panel considered a report from the City Solicitor and Secretary, proposing that all new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver's licences be required to undertake a Driving Standards Agency "Taxi" test. The proposal was submitted to the Environment Committee who approved the recommendation on 13th March 2001. It was resolved:

- (1) That the proposal submitted by The Driving Standards Agency to undertake the testing of new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Licences be accepted.
- (2) That the Licensing Officer be authorised to undertake local knowledge tests of not more than 30 minutes duration and at no additional cost.
- (3) That the above Taxi Test Assessment take effect as from 1 May 2001.
- (4) That the current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Conditions be amended to read:
 - (a) where a driver appears before the Licensing Panel for a breach of the conditions or a driving related offence and his licence is suspended, then he may be required to undergo and pass the appropriate category of DSA test within a period of 13 weeks of the suspension and should he fail the said test or fail to take the said test, that his licence be revoked.
 - (b) where a driver appears before the Licensing Panel for a breach of the conditions or a driving related offence and receives a written warning as to his future conduct, then he may be required to undergo and pass the appropriate category of DSA test within a period of 26 weeks of the warning and should he fail the said test, or fail to take the said test, that his licence be revoked.
- (5) That the City Solicitor and Secretary monitor the above process for a period of six months from the date of commencement, after which he be requested to submit a progress report to this Panel.

From 1st May 2001, all new applicants were required to undertake the DSA test, with the first test date scheduled for 1st June 2001. On that day the DSA invited a number of guests to their test centre including The Mayor of Carlisle (Councillor Mrs Doreen Parsons), members of the Licensing Panel, representatives from the trade, Local Authority Licensing Officers and other interested parties.

The figures from the DSA until the end of December 2001 are:

22 new applicants have been tested including 2 existing licence holders who appeared

before the Panel following a motoring conviction and were required to take the test. The Driving Standards Agency reports that 15 of those taking the test were successful. Of these 2 failed on the first attempt and had to retake the examination. This is a commendable pass rate of 68%, compared with the national average of about 40%.

During the year three local driving schools who became aware of the requirement for new drivers to be tested, contacted the council to offer tuition to new drivers. A meeting was held with them and the DSA, where it was agreed that a single A4 sheet explaining their services would be included in the DSA application pack.

A number of queries regarding the logistics of carrying out the tests have been raised during the year. These include the size of vehicle the test is taken in, logistics of the wheelchair accessible test, provision of 'L' plates, clarification of pass certificate to name a few. These have all been resolved through discussion with the trade and consultation with the local DSA representative at Kendal.

The scheme has been well received by the Hackney and Private Hire trade and I recommend that it continue in its current format.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report.

Prepared by J A Messenger