

PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT

Councillor A. Duffield (in the Chair).

Councillors D. Jarman (Vice-Chair), D. Bunting, Mrs. D.L. Haddad, J. Holden, D. Jerrome, S. Thomas and M. Whetton

In attendance

N. Smith	Head of Regulatory Services
G. Levy	Regulatory Services Mgr (Trading Standards & Licensing)
J. Boyle	Licensing Team Leader
M. Dhaliwal	Trainee Solicitor
N. Owen	Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

Also Present

Councillor E. W. Stennett (Substitute for Councillor B. Brotherton)

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B. Brotherton

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd August 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. INTRODUCTION OF A KNOWLEDGE TEST AND CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST FOR ALL NEW HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER APPLICANTS

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report requesting Members to consider re-introducing a local area taxi knowledge test; and a proposal to raise the level of the English language test for all new hackney carriage/private hire driver applicants.

The Sub-Committee were informed that a consultation exercise had been carried out between 1st May 2018 and 29th June 2018 and that hackney carriage trade representatives; private hire operators; all persons on the current driver applicant waiting list; and all Councillors had been consulted. 729 responses to the consultation were received.

A Councillor queried whether this would apply to driver's renewing their licences and was told at present it would not apply to those drivers as there may be legal issues if no complaints had been received about a driver regarding language/communication issues.

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It was agreed to look at the number of new licences issued since the removal of the knowledge test in 2015 and that an update regarding the legal position on renewals be provided at the next meeting.

Members of the trade who were present gave their views on the proposals.

The Sub-Committee were informed that the proposal regarding dual badges would be considered as part of the wider AGMA common minimum standards project as further work was required to consider the ramification of this proposal.

RESOLVED: -

- (1) It was agreed that all those submitting an application for a private hire/hackney carriage driver's licence on or after the implementation date be required to pass a local area knowledge test as part of the application process and that there be a corresponding increase in the fee to cover associated costs.
- (2) It was agreed that those submitting an application for a private hire/hackney carriage driver's licence on or after the implementation date must satisfy the Council that they are able to meet the language level which has been set for those seeking to apply for naturalisation as a British citizen; or have passed a relevant qualification at an equivalent level.
- (3) It was agreed that delegated authority be granted to a nominated officer in Regulatory Services, in appropriate and limited circumstances which are to be determined by them, to conduct an individual assessment on an applicant's competence in English when there is a problem supplying proof by one of the above methods.
- (4) It was agreed that the Corporate Director, Place be authorised to approve the content of the knowledge test; and the implementation date of both the knowledge and English language tests.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm