

13 Introduction of the Driving Standards Agency Taxi Test and Assessment for all new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers

The Cabinet considered Report No 103/07 relating to the proposed adoption of the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) Driving Taxi Test and Assessment, as a requirement for all prospective Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 stated that an applicant for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Drivers Licence was a 'fit and proper' person to hold a Drivers Licence. The Council needed to be satisfied that all applicants met such criteria.

All applicants were subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check which disclosed any previous convictions, including driving offences. Any offences disclosed were then taken into consideration before a licence was granted.

At present, no suitable driving test was conducted by the licensing officers as they were not trained or qualified to conduct such a test.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers were the only group of professional drivers in the country who were not required to pass a further national standard driving test before being allowed to carry passengers for hire and reward.

The DSA had been conducting a dedicated driving test for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers for the past five years. The test, which was described by the Agency as a mature drivers test, somewhere between the learner and advanced driver test, was conducted by a DSA examiner who had been specifically trained for that purpose. It included specific manoeuvres that were often performed by taxi's such as 'U-turns' and not stopping where passenger doors could not be opened fully. It was undertaken at Brighton/Hove, Crawley and Eastbourne DSA test centres and offered several benefits, details of which were set out in paragraph 2.5 of the Report.

As part of the consultation process, a letter and questionnaire had been sent to the Council's licenced Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers asking for their comments on the proposals, further details of which were set out in paragraph 3 of the Report and in the Appendices thereto.

Resolved:

- 13.1** That the requirement that new applicants for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Drivers Licence pass the Driving Standards Agency Taxi Test and Assessment before their application is considered by the Council, as detailed in Report No 103/07, be adopted.

DPES

Reason for the Decision:

To assist in the process to determine whether or not an applicant for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Drivers Licence is a 'fit and proper' person to hold such Licence.