

**At a meeting of the REGULATORY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, P. Gibson, Heron, Howe, Johnston, Lawson, Leadbitter, Turner and A. Wood

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bewick, Hunt, D. MacKnight and Scaplehorn.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 Part I**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020, Part I (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Training for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and Disability Awareness**

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which requested the Committee's approval of the imposition of new mandatory requirements that persons applying for a hackney carriage, or private hire driver's licence and existing licence holders undertake the Council's prescribed training course on safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and disability awareness, with refresher training undertaken every three years upon drivers applying to renew their licences.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Steve Wearing, Principal Licensing Officer, presented the report and advised that 50 drivers had signed up for the training sessions arranged for 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2020. However, only 33 drivers had attended these sessions. There were further sessions arranged for 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and 71 drivers had booked to attend.

Once this training had been completed by all drivers there would be a new e-learning course arranged and new drivers would be required to complete the course before taking the knowledge test. The test would then have an additional module relating to the safeguarding and disability awareness training.

Councillor P. Gibson questioned whether the training would include information on how to identify guide dogs and the requirement to transport them. He also asked whether Members could be informed of the content of the training. Mr Wearing advised that some of the detail of the training content was set out at Paragraph 3.3 of the Report. He agreed to investigate the possibility of Members being able to access the e-learning course, so that they could see what was involved. Safeguarding officers had been involved in the development of the training. The Equality Act 2010 was covered in the training and this would include information on the requirements around guide dogs.

Councillor Lawson queried whether the knowledge test was done as an e-learning module. Mr Wearing advised that it was a test that was undertaken at the Civic Centre in person. This ensured that identification could be checked and allowed officers to invigilate the test. It would continue to be operated in this way and would only be able to be done subsequent to the completion of the e-learning course.

The Chairman queried whether there was a limit on the number of times an applicant could fail the knowledge test. Mr Wearing advised that he was not aware of any limit; some authorities did set a limit of around five attempts.

Councillor A. Wood then asked whether there was a minimum time between retests, or could a driver take a test straight after failing. Mr Wearing advised that the tests were only held approximately every three weeks, so a driver failing a test would need to wait at least three weeks between tests.

Councillor A. Wood then queried how the test was marked. Mrs Dawn Howley, Senior Licensing Officer, advised that there were separate modules covering subjects including: numeracy; routes; taxi bylaws; plus a section of mandatory core questions. The mandatory questions had a pass requirement of 100%, while the individual modules had a pass level of 85%.

Mr Thompson stated that it would be sensible to require that the Council's Prescribed Training be made mandatory for Applicants and existing drivers. It was in accordance with the draft DfT Statutory Guidance and sought to promote the safety of the defined groups in issue, i.e. children, vulnerable adults and disabled persons. Mr. Thompsons explained that in real terms, the mandatory training adds another level to the "fit and proper person test".

2. RESOLVED that approval be given to the new policy requirements:-
  - a. From 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020 as part of the initial application process for a licence to drive hackney carriages and / or private hire vehicles that an applicant is required to undertake the Council's Prescribed Training and subsequent knowledge test prior to submitting their relevant application form for a licence, otherwise the applicant's initial application will be suspended and put on hold until such time as the Prescribed Training as been undertaken;

- b. From 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020 all existing licenced hackney carriage drivers and / or private hire drivers are required to undertake the Council's Prescribed Training within a period of three months following receipt of a letter from the Council explaining such training arrangements, otherwise a driver's licence will be automatically suspended until such time as the Prescribed Training has been undertaken by the driver; and
- c. From 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2020, upon renewal application and every three years thereafter, all existing licenced hackney carriage drivers and / or private hire drivers are required to undertake a refresher course relating to the Prescribed Training.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006**

- 3. RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered likely to include the disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual and the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Authority holding that information). (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1 and 3).

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,  
Chairman.

#### **Note:-**

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to members of the public.

Additional minutes in respect of further items are included in Part II.