

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 19 June 2012
title: Requirement of group 2 medical standard.
submitted by: Chief Executive
principal author: Mair Hill

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Committee's view on whether the Council should retain the requirement that Group 2 medical standards should apply to all taxi and private hire drivers.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Community Objectives - None
 - Corporate Priorities – A well-managed licensing service will promote the Council's priority of being a well managed Council.
 - Other Considerations - None

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In February 1995 the House of Commons Transport Select Committee on taxis and private hire vehicles recommended that taxi licence applicants should pass a medical examination before a licence could be granted.
- 2.2 Responsibility for determining the standards, including medical requirements to be applied to taxi drivers, over and above the driver licensing requirements rests with the local authority and therefore Ribble Valley Borough Council (the "**Council**").
- 2.3 Current best practice advice is contained in the booklet "Fitness to Drive: A Guide for Health Professionals" (the "**Guide**") published in 2006 by The Royal Society of Medicine Press Limited ("**RSM**") on behalf of the Department for Transport. The Guide recommends that the Group 2 medical standards applied by the DVLA in relation to bus and lorry drivers, should also be applied by local authorities to taxi drivers.
- 2.4 The Council has followed this recommendation and refers to it as a "*Note to Doctor*" within its form entitled "*medical certificate to certify that an applicant for a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licence is fit to drive the public*".
- 2.5 Committee should note that the following neighbouring authorities also apply the group 2 two medical standard: Blackburn with Darwen; Craven; South Ribble; Burnley; and Pendle.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council has recently received applications from individuals who whilst fit to drive a car did not pass the group 2 medical standards and so have not been granted licences. On both occasions this related to the sight element. Committee is therefore asked to consider whether it wishes to continue to follow the recommendation in the Guide and maintain that the group 2 standard apply to all applicants for a private hire or taxi driver's licence in the Ribble Valley.

3.2 Committee must therefore decide whether to endorse the current practice of applying the Group 2 test without exception or in the alternative specify by what other method the Council will satisfy itself that the driver is fit to drive.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources - None
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None
- Political - None
- Reputation – A well-managed licensing service with high standards will enhance the reputation of the Council.
- Equality & Diversity – Whilst the strict application of the group 2 standard may affect certain groups more directly this may be deemed necessary to ensure public safety.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Committee decide that the group 2 medical standard should continue to be applied to all applicants for private hire or taxi driver's licences.

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DIANE RICE
HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

REF: MJH/Licensing Committee/19 June 2012

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