

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No. 6

meeting date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013  
title: PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S TEMPORARY LICENCES  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: MAIR HILL

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Committee's views upon temporary Private Hire licences.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives - }
- Corporate Priorities - } Consideration of these issues will promote the Council's aim to be a well-managed Council.
- Other Considerations - }

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members have requested that Committee review whether the system of temporary private hire driver's licences should be retained. Currently, the Council issues a 6 month temporary licences to applicants who comply with the requirements on health, age, driving qualifications and who are deemed to be a fit and proper person, but have not passed the knowledge and steering to success course.
- 2.2 Each applicant will only be issued with 1 temporary licence and pursuant to conditions 8 and 9 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Standard Conditions they must:

*"pass the Council's knowledge test before a Driver's Licence will be issued. The knowledge test can be taken either as a written test or as a mobile test in the applicant's vehicle. Applicants must contact the Council to make an appointment to take the knowledge test. An applicant will be allowed no more than four attempts to pass the knowledge test ...*

and

*...must produce evidence of having passed the steering to success course at Rossendale College."*

- 2.3 This issue was previously considered by Committee on 10 April 2008 ("**2008 Committee**") as part of measures considered to improve driver standards. The 2008 Committee having considered various options decided to introduce a requirement for applicants to sit the Steering to Success course and not to remove the provision of temporary licences.

2.4 The report to the 2008 Committee by the Legal Services Manager set out the arguments for and against temporary licences as follows:

“... Arguments in support of this include the practical advantages of a driver that knows the area well, thereby ensuring that they are more likely to be on time and that their attention can be directed solely at traffic conditions (rather than to try to find a specific location). Conversely, many drivers find the test difficult to master, and take several attempts to complete the test even with 6 months practical experience to assist them.”

2.5 Whilst these arguments remain valid, increasingly temporary licence holders are not even attempting to pass either the knowledge test or the steering to success test but simply taking a 6-month temporary licence and not applying for a Private Hire Driver's licence at the end of that period. In the circumstances the Council as licensing authority is not able to ensure that private hire drivers are achieving the required standard of knowledge of the area or driving and as such any benefit of operating this system is lost.

### 3. ISSUES

3.1 Committee is therefore asked to consider whether the Council should consult licence holders about whether to:

3.1.1 continue to issue temporary licences; or

3.1.2 issue a private hire drivers licence only once an applicant has passed the knowledge test and steering to success course.

3.2 Adoption of the latter position would ensure that applicants have reached the required level of knowledge of the area and driving standards before driving the public however were this to be adopted the knowledge test would need to be a written test only, as the drivers would not be licensed and consequently not insured to carry officers in their vehicle whilst completing the test.

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – No implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Improved control of licence holders should improve public safety.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – Improved public safety will enhance the Council's reputation.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

**5. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Instruct the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services to seek the views of licence holders on removing the provision of a temporary licence for private hire drivers and requiring all private hire drivers to pass the knowledge test and steering to success course prior to receiving a private hire driver's licence.

MAIR HILL  
SOLICITOR

MARSHAL SCOTT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Report of Legal Services Manager dated 10 April 2008

For further information please ask for Mair Hill, extension 3216

REF: MJH/Licensing Committee/17 September 2013