

APPENDIX 1 - TAXI POLICY REVIEW – WORKING GROUP

Session 1 - Driver Policy

Date / Time of meeting: 17th Nov 2016 @ 14:00

Venue: EH CDC Offices

In Attendance:

- Cllr John Connor
- Cllr Len Macey
- Cllr Henry Potter
- Giusj Di Lauro (Legal Team)
- Alex Barson (Licensing Team)

Apologies:

- Cllr John Elliott
- Laurence Foord (Licensing Manager)

Overview:

AB gave brief overview of legislative framework that governs HC and PH licensing regimes. Advised on current policy. Work done by Ian Smith to introduce first written policy in 2011/2012. Needs reviewing, as had experience with the policy, so have an understanding of areas that need improving. Also best practice has evolved, legislative changes etc which requires the policy to be updated.

PH Knowledge Test – Members in support, but the content of this needs to be carefully considered, so that it helps ensure candidates have a basic understanding of legislation/policy/highway code – maybe landmarks).

Further Action - AB to look at computerised knowledge test system developed by Diamond. May also need to look at English language test.

CSE Training – Members in support. This can be offered for free through Pam Bushby. It may be that a condition will need to be placed on the PH Driver's Licence requiring this training to be completed within a defined period of time.

Further Action – Difficulty with altering HC Byelaws therefore may be worth exploring issuing dual licences to new HC Drivers as standard. Discussion

E-Cigs – Members in support in prohibiting the use of e-cigs in licensed vehicles.

Dress code – Members in agreement to prohibit in appropriate footwear, such as flip flops – term used in other policies is 'closed heel shoe'. Some discussion around sandals.

Areas where Members raised queries/concerns:

Frequency of Medical Examinations - Discussion around bringing the frequency of medicals in line with that recommended by the DVLA for vocational drivers. Currently we require a medical every 4 years regardless of age and once a year after 60. DVLA – every 5 years from the age of 45 and every year from the age of 65. All local Councils follow the DVLA recommended frequency. Cllr Connor raised a concern regarding increasing the age for annual medicals from 60 to 65, primarily regarding vision. Discussion around splitting the medical and eye test, but difficult to manage.

Further Action - A possible compromise could be every 5 years from 45 and then every year from 60?

Minimum Age - Discussion around minimum age and length of time that a UK/EEA Driving Licence held before eligible to hold a PH/HC Licence. Law requires any applicant to have held a full licence for at least 12 months at time of application. Discussion around the minimum age being 18 or 21? Cllr Conner advised that insurance at that age would be prohibitive, so ultimately self-regulating in relation to youngsters. Cllr Potter suggested that consideration be given to 3 years as the minimum amount of time that a full UK/EEA driving licence is held. AB advised that some Authorities do specify 3 years, but did point out that it is no guarantee that person is a good driver. Might not have even utilised licence in that time. Key test will be driving assessment.

Further Action - Further discussion required with legal.

Penalty Point System – Discussed pro's and con's of this. Jim Button advocates that driver should have the ability to contest any points issued at Committee. Is this necessary? Only go to Committee if driver reaches the point threshold. Appeals could go to Lic Man or Head of Service rather than Licensing Committee. Interesting to note that East Hants have dispensed with the appeals process until they reach the points limit. They have also made it 12 points over 3 years rather than 12 points over 1 year.

Further Action - Resource implications. Needs further discussion with legal.

Meeting finished at approx. 15.40