

**Chichester District Council**  
**General Licensing Committee**  
**14 June 2017**

**Update regarding knowledge test for new private hire and hackney carriage drivers**

**1. Contact(s)**

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**2. Executive Summary**

<p>This report provides an update in relation to the introduction of a computerised knowledge test for new Private Hire Driver Licence applications and changes to the existing test for Hackney Carriage drivers.</p>
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**3. Introduction**

3.1 At the last meeting of the General Licensing Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March Members approved the implementation of a knowledge test for new applicants applying for a Private Hire Driver Licence, in order to help raise awareness and standards in relation to those persons entering the private hire profession for the first time.

3.2 Officers have opted for the computerised knowledge test system supplied by a third party trading as Diamond. As outlined at the previous meeting the benefits of the computerised system are:

- Complete flexibility in terms of how many sections and the theme of each within the knowledge test.
- The Council has complete discretion over the pass mark (the system enables a pass mark to be set for each individual section)
- The questions are selected at random from a pool devised between the Council and product provider.
- The questions are multiple-choice and the system will randomise the order of answers each time a test is sat.
- Photographs and pictures can be uploaded to base questions on.
- The candidate is required to input a driving licence number or case reference number to verify their identity before taking the test.
- Answers are recorded on the system when given by the candidate during the test. This can be easily accessed by officers of the Licensing Team in case there is a query or challenge.
- The system allows for statistical analysis of the questions in terms of how many times it has been answered correctly/incorrectly. This assists officers

with assessing the degree of difficulty for a question and whether any adjustments are required.

#### **4. Structure of knowledge test for private hire driver applicants**

- 4.1 Officers from the Licensing Team have been working with Diamond to formulate the structure of the knowledge test and also develop a bank of questions for each section.
- 4.2 The computerised test is multiple-choice. The applicant will be given a question and have to select the correct answer from four options. An applicant for a new private hire driver licence will need to pass all five sections, which are:
- Section A – Road signs and road markings
  - Section B – Highway code
  - Section C – Places of interest in and around the Chichester District
  - Section D – Private hire law and policy
  - Section G – Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation and disability awareness
- 4.3 Each section will have 10 questions, which will be randomly selected from a bank of questions for that topic. The total amount of questions will be 50. Time allowed will be 1 hour and 15 minutes. The fee for the test has been set at **£41**, which mirrors the cost of the current Hackney Carriage Knowledge Test.
- 4.4 The pass mark for each section is **70%**. If an applicant does not pass a section(s) they will need to re-sit the failed section(s) only. The applicant will be permitted two attempts at passing any failed sections. If they are not successful at the end of this period there will be a 6 month period in which they are not able to re-sit. The fee for any re-sit will be **£20**.
- 4.5 The information that an applicant will need to revise is contained in the Highway Code, which we will recommend the applicant purchases. There is also a guidance document for applicants, which explains what the knowledge test involves and provides details of what information they need to read and understand in order to have a greater likelihood of being successful. A copy of the guidance document is at **Appendix 1**.

#### **5. Structure of knowledge test for hackney carriage driver applicants**

- 5.1 A written knowledge test is already in place for any person applying for a hackney carriage driver licence. This has been converted across to the computerised test and developed along similar lines to the test for private hire drivers.
- 5.2 The sections that will need to be passed by an applicant for a new hackney carriage driver's licence are:
- Section A – Road signs and road markings
  - Section B – Highway code
  - Section C – Places of interest in and around the Chichester District
  - Section E – Hackney Carriage Law & Policy
  - Section F – Hackney Carriage Geography Test
  - Section G – Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation and disability awareness

- 5.3 The only differences between the two tests are that an applicant for a hackney carriage driver licence will need to pass a section on hackney carriage law and policy. The applicant will also need to sit an additional section on geographical routes around the district and residential street names in the Chichester area. An extra 15 minutes will be allowed. It is estimated the test will take 1 hour and 30 minutes. All other aspects of the test will be the same as the test for hackney carriage drivers i.e. pass mark of 70% for, fee of £41, re-sit criteria etc.
- 5.4 The testing requirements for other scenarios where a dual licence is being applied for are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1 Any application for a new private hire or hackney carriage driver licence, received on or after **1<sup>st</sup> June 2017** are now required to sit and pass all relevant sections of the knowledge test.
- 6.2 The computerised test will be available from early July. Any applications received from 1<sup>st</sup> June will be validated in the normal way, with references contacted, as well as the criminal record and driving licence checks being obtained. As soon as test dates are known, applicants will be contacted by a member of the Licensing Team to book an appropriate slot. Applicants will be contacted and sit their test in order of the date of application submission.
- 6.3 All licensed private hire operators were emailed on 1<sup>st</sup> June to advise them of the details of the new knowledge test and its introduction.
- 6.4 The bank of questions have been drafted and submitted to Diamond for them to upload to the computerised system. It is estimated by Diamond that this will take two weeks. Towards the end of June a date will be set for a representative of Diamond to visit the Council offices to install the system on the laptops, demonstrate how to use the system and undertake initial testing.
- 6.5 The Council's IT department have set aside four laptops, which will be solely used for the knowledge test. Our IT department will be liaising with Diamond to assist with uploading the system on to the laptops.
- 6.6 Discussions are ongoing with the Facilities Team and Health & Safety in terms of where best to conduct the test within the Council building, to ensure that this does not conflict with the Council's security and safety protocols. It is anticipated that one of the training rooms will be used for hosting the knowledge test. It is also envisaged that test dates will be arranged to take place every two weeks, although this may vary depending upon demand and officer availability to invigilate and supervise the test.

## **7. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – 'Knowledge Test – CDC Guidance Document'