

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

20 February 2020

Taxi and Private Hire Drivers' Knowledge Test Update

Report by Head of Legal & Governance Services (Report No. 20/52)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members with regards to the knowledge test for Private Hire Car Drivers and Taxi Car Drivers.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1. The Council, as Licensing Authority, regulates civic licensing under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
- 1.2. Within the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 provision is made for the Council to require applicants for a Taxi/Private Hire Driver Licence to take a test of knowledge of the geographical area. Such tests may relate to the layout of roads within the area and other matters relating to the operation of a taxi/private hire as the Council may consider desirable.
- 1.3. A report was submitted and approved by the Licensing Committee on 10 January 2019 (Report number 19/1) which resulted in the introduction of the Taxi/Private Hire Car Driver knowledge test. It was agreed that this would be introduced for both renewals and new applications; however, it was also agreed that it would be introduced for new applications only initially. This was to allow the Licensing Manager to monitor staff time and resources required to undertake the knowledge test. An update to was to be provided to the Committee at a future date.
- 1.4. The taxi/private hire driver's knowledge test comprises 60 questions in six parts:
 - Part 1 – questions relating to Public Buildings and Local Landmarks,
 - Part 2 – Street Names,
 - Part 3 – Routes,
 - Part 4 – Knowledge of the Highway Code,
 - Part 5 – questions relating to the conditions of the licence,
 - Part 6 – Arithmetical and general questions.
- 1.5. The test takes the form of multiple-choice questions/answers for 4 parts and written answers for 2 parts of the test.

- 1.6 The pass rate for the test is 85% (applicants must answer 51 questions correctly to pass). However, should an applicant obtain a score of between 45 and 51, rather than requiring the applicant re-sit the entire test, it was considered to be more effective to have the applicant revise and re-sit part/s of the test where they did not achieve the necessary mark. This has proved to be highly successful with all applicants managing to pass their partial re-sits on the first attempt.
- 1.7 Applicants are given three attempts to pass the test. If an applicant does not pass after three attempts, the application is deemed to be voluntarily withdrawn and no refund is given. This restriction is required to ensure continued compliance with the time limit within which applications must be determined (9 months).
- 1.8 If the applicant fails to take the test after three appointments have been sent out, the application is also deemed to be voluntarily withdrawn and no refund is given.
- 1.9 To date, 62 applications have been received, out of which 42 applicants have successfully passed the test (67%), 12 are awaiting re-sits and 8 have been marked as voluntarily withdrawn.
- 2.0 It has been found that the administration of the test by a small team takes up a considerable amount of time. It is therefore proposed that the test is provided to new applicants only. This will be kept under review, and a further report will be submitted to Committee in the future if it is considered that the position should change.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee approve that the Taxi/Private Hire Car Drivers' Knowledge Test continue for new applications only.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee
- (i) notes the progress in implementing the knowledge test for taxi/private hire drivers; and
 - (ii) agrees that the Taxi/Private Hire Car Driver knowledge test continues to be in place for new applications only.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	None
Corporate Plan	None
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	None
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement
Not applicable.

Corporate Plan
Not applicable.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The cost for administering the 'Knowledge Test' will be met by an increase in the fee for the grant of a Taxi/Private Hire Driver's Licence.

- Workforce
2.2 None

- 2.3 Asset Management (land, property, IT)
Not applicable

3. Assessments

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

A full EFIA has determined that the proposal is relevant for the purposes of EFIA, with the following outcome being decided:

1. No major change is required. The Policy, Practice, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option is robust and can continue without amendment.

3.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment
Not applicable

3.3 Sustainability
Not applicable

3.4 Legal and Governance
The proposals comply with the provisions of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

3.5 Risk
Not applicable

4. Consultation

4.1 Internal
None

4.2 External
Engagement has taken place in the form of a Working Group from the Taxi Trade in relation to the Knowledge Test.

5. Communication

Communications Plan
5.1 Not applicable

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS
Not applicable

7. APPENDICES
None