

TO: **REGULATORY COMMITTEE – 24th JANUARY 2007**

SUBJECT: **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS - MEDICALS**

FROM: **MEMBERS' SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To suggest a change in the way the Council carries out medical examinations of applications for and renewal of, hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 All applicants for private hire and hackney carriage drivers licences have to satisfy medical standards of C1 Category Group II, which are applicable to heavy goods vehicle drivers and public service vehicle drivers. Once licensed, they have to continue to comply with the standard and have further medical examinations from time to time. At present, after acquiring a licence, drivers are not subject to a further medical until the age of 45 years when a five year check is then started. This could be a period in excess of 20 years.
- 2.2 At present, to ensure that applicants and existing drivers comply with the standard, Doctor Popplewell, the Occupational Health Medical Officer carries out the necessary medical examinations.
- 2.3 Doctor Popplewell charges the Council £55 per examination. This charge is passed on to applicants and drivers together with a charge of £7 to cover the Council's administrative costs. (Total cost to the drivers is £62)
- 2.4 The driver's pay the Council who then arrange the appointment with the doctor. This is both time consuming and, if the appointment made is not suitable for the applicant, a further circle of telephone calls must be made – Council to doctor and then back to the applicant.
- 2.5 A further problem is that there is sometimes a considerable wait for medicals, often 8 weeks. This is unacceptable both for new applicants and for renewals.
- 2.6 A national company, Cotswold Medicals Limited, specialising in HGV, PSV and taxi medicals has been located by officers. They have centres in Coventry, Rugby and Birmingham and are able to provide a better appointment system..
- 2.7 Their current charge for a taxi medical is £40 (soon to be £42) of which £5 is donated to a young people's charity.
- 2.8 Drivers would book their own appointments and pay the company directly, ensuring that applicants get a time and date suitable to themselves, and also relieves a considerable administrative burden on officers.
- 2.9 As the now combined hackney carriage/private hire driver's licence will soon be issued for 3 years, expiring on the date of the CRB renewal, officers propose that a

three year medical is now undertaken to coincide with this anniversary. This means that, on renewal of a hackney carriage/private hire driver's licence, the driver completes both a CRB and has a medical examination.

2.10 Most other councils appear to have adopted or are about to adopt a three year medical examination.

3. **DECISION REQUIRED**

3.1 Members are asked accept the officer's request for a change in the way that medical examinations are conducted for hackney carriage/private hire drivers.

3.2 Officers feel that a three yearly test will be an added safeguard and that, by changing the way the medicals are carried out will ensure a more efficient service for drivers and the council, at the same time benefiting a charity and costing drivers less.

3.3 Should members accept the changes, they would be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

David Davies
Licensing Services Manager

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Areas and the District Affected: All
Key Decision: Yes
Included in Forward Plan: No

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