

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Sharon Davies, Head of Licensing Service
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015

## HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS – APPLICATION PROCESS

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider a report on proposed amendments to the process of applying for a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To require applicants for a new Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence to undertake safeguarding training before they can be licensed. This training to be delivered as part of the existing knowledge test.
- 2.2 To confirm that the provisions of the Deregulation Act 2015 dealing with length of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licences will be phased in to ensure that the licence renewal date falls at the same time that the Disclosure and Barring Service check is due.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 Licensed drivers can be responsible for transporting vulnerable passengers. It is important for the protection of the public that only fit and proper persons are licensed.

The phasing of the provisions related to the length of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licences to allow the Council to effectively deliver the amendments outlined in this legislation.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not to introduce safeguarding training as it is not desirable due to the responsibility of drivers for transporting vulnerable people.

Not to phase in the implementation of the Deregulation Act 2015 which is not desirable as licences would not be in line with Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

**4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is “Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable”

**5.0 Background Information**

5.1 The subject of child sexual exploitation has received national publicity over the last few years with some high profile cases in places such as Rochdale, Rotherham and Oxford that have involved licensed drivers. Whilst there is no indication that drivers in Blackpool are involved in organised Child Sexual Exploitation, licensed drivers can be a source of valuable information which would assist the authorities in identifying abusers and those at risk of abuse.

5.2 It is important that licensed drivers receive appropriate training on the subject so they know what to look out for and what to do if they do have concerns. Many authorities across the Country are also requiring their drivers to undertake training. Multi agency meetings have been taking place over the last few months to ensure that a consistent approach to this training is adopted across Lancashire.

5.3 A training package has been developed by Blackpool Safeguarding Children’s Board. This consists of a 30 minute presentation and a short quiz to demonstrate understanding.

5.4 The proposal is that all applicants for a new Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver’s Licence will be required to undertake this training package as a pre requisite to licensing. This package will be delivered by members of the licensing team as part of the existing knowledge test. Whilst there is no pass or fail on the quiz, applicants who demonstrate through their answers, a complete lack of understanding or do not complete the quiz at all, will not be considered as a fit and proper person to be licensed. The Sub-Committee is asked to approve the proposals for training of new drivers and make it a pre requisite to being licensed.

5.5 The intention is that existing drivers will be required to undertake the training. The Sub-Committee will be updated on the proposals for this at a later date.

5.6 On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 parts of the Deregulation Act 2015 come into force. One

provision increases the standard length of a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers' Licence to three years, although the Council retains the ability to grant licensed for a lesser period if appropriate in the individual case.

5.7 Blackpool Council already offers the option of a three year driving licence however to be eligible currently the granting of a three year licence must fall in line with the three year Disclosure and Barring Service cycle.

5.8 It is important that the drivers licensed by this authority are fit and proper persons to be licensed. For this reason it is proposed that three year licences will only be issued to drivers if it falls in with the Disclosure and Barring Service cycle. If a driver for example is due to have a new certificate next year, they would only be issued with a licence for twelve months. The Sub-Committee is asked to approve this proposal.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

None

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 The Sub-Committee must be satisfied that the applicant remains a fit and proper person to be licensed and be in line with provisions outlined in the Deregulation Act 2015, the recommendation at 2.2 balances these requirements.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None