

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Head of Refuse & Environment

TO: Licensing Committee

27/1/2014

WARDS: All

### **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR TAXI DRIVERS**

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#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As part of the checks which the City Council undertakes to ensure that drivers of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles are fit and proper people to be licensed, they must, from time to time, pass a medical examination.
- 1.2 This report reviews the present arrangements for the undertaking of medical examinations and proposes an alternative arrangement.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to determine whether to consider changing the present arrangements for determining the medical fitness of taxi and private hire drivers and, if so:
- 2.2
  - a. To instruct officers to consult with the taxi trade and the representatives of general practitioners about the proposed change and
  - b. To report back to Licensing Sub-Committee the results of the consultations, to enable a decision to be taken as to the future policy with regard to medical checks.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Medical reports are required for all new applicants for driver licences of all description and at the age of 45 years, unless it has been indicated as appropriate on a more frequent basis by a medical examiner.
- 3.2 On reaching age 45, licensed drivers are examined and passed fit every five years and from 65, annual certification is required.

- 3.3 Council policy is that all drivers must meet the requirements of Group II standard for category C1 vehicles as set out by DVLA, which is a higher test than that applied to drivers in general.
- 3.4 Additional requirements are specified in respect of drivers who are insulin-dependent diabetics.
- 3.5 New drivers and those who require a medical examination prior to renewal of their licences are required to arrange an examination with one of the two medical practitioners approved by the Council to undertake medical examinations.
- 3.6 The approved medical practitioners do not have immediate access to the medical records of individuals who present themselves for examination under the scheme and this may, potentially, limit their ability to recognise and assess some conditions which do not present clearly observable symptoms.
- 3.6 Where the approved medical practitioner considers that further enquiry is required with, for example, the driver's General Practitioner, this can entail a delay in being able to assess the driver and, potentially, in the Council being able to determine an application. This, in turn, may result in a driver being unable to work whilst certification is completed.
- 3.7 An alternative to the current process would be to change the current policy and to require drivers to arrange a medical examination by their GP, as someone who holds their patient record and would be in a position to assess their suitability, with regard to the Group II standard for C1 vehicles, more effectively and quickly. This has also been suggested to officers by trade representatives, in the past.
- 3.8 If it is considered that changes should usefully be made, there would be implications, for existing approved practitioners, for local GPs and for drivers and a period of consultation with these groups would be appropriate before a final decision is taken.
- 3.9 It would be necessary for GPs to be fully aware of the standards which the Council requires and for a common form of certification to be adopted and introduced.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 It is suggested that a consultation should be undertaken with representatives of the taxi and private hire trades and with the Clinical Commissioning Groups; CATCH and Cam Health on behalf of GPs and the NHS

#### **5. OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Retain the existing arrangement of using approved medical practitioners to undertake certification of drivers' fitness and review

both the number of such approved practitioners and the feasibility of achieving ready access to medical records which they may need to facilitate their assessments.

- 5.2 Explore, by means of consultation with relevant organisations, whether it would be more appropriate and efficient to require certification of fitness to be undertaken by the driver's GP.

## 6. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The priority for the Licensing Authority, is to ensure that drivers licensed by it as hackney carriage and / or private hire drivers are medically fit to do so, having regard to the standards laid down for Group II standard for C1 vehicles.
- 6.2 Members should consider whether, potentially, the current procedure should be changed to assist in delivering this objective.

## 7. **IMPLICATIONS**

### (a) **Financial Implications**

None for the Council, but potential for a wider variation in charges as between different GP practices, if a change is made.

### (b) **Staffing Implications**

There should be no significant staffing implications

### (c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

Nil

### (d) **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### (e) **Consultation and communication**

Consultation would be carried out with representative bodies, as indicated in 4. above.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report:

DVLA Guide to the current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive

To inspect these documents contact Robert Osbourn on extension 7894

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Robert Osbourn on extension 7894.

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