

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Head of Refuse & Environment

TO: Licensing Committee

26/1/2015

WARDS: All

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR TAXI DRIVERS

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 On 27 January 2014, Members agreed that officers consult with the taxi trade and the representatives of general practitioners on an alternative arrangement to that currently in place.
- 1.3 Members also agreed that officers report back to Licensing Committee the results of the consultation, to enable a decision to be taken as to the future policy and process for Medical Examinations for Taxi Drivers.
- 1.4 This report outlines the present arrangements for the undertaking of medical examinations and proposes an alternative arrangement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the following arrangement in determining the medical fitness of hackney carriage, private hire and dual drivers:
 - a. To maintain a Council approved list of medical practitioners, to undertake certification of drivers fitness in accordance with the Group II standards for C1 vehicles and also
 - b. To allow the drivers' GPs, to undertake certification of drivers fitness in accordance with the Group II standards for C1 vehicles with effect from 1st April 2015.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A medical assessment is required for all new Private Hire, Hackney Carriage and Dual Driver applicants (unless they hold a current HGV or PSV licence in which case if a driver holds one of these licences it will not be necessary for them to have a further medical, provided they have the Class 2 Provisional Medical entitlement placed onto their DVLA Licence) and thereafter at the age of 45.
- 3.2 Once a licensed driver has reached the age of 45 the medical assessment must be renewed five-yearly and, at the age of 65, it will last for one year and be required annually thereafter.
- 3.3 If a driver is diagnosed with a medical condition which may affect his or her driving ability at any time, the Council may require either more frequent medical checks and/ or supporting evidence from medical specialists or consultants.
- 3.4 The Council requires that all drivers must meet the Group II medical standards for Category C1 vehicles as set out by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- 3.5 Currently the Council has one designated medical practitioner which has been approved to undertake the medical assessments. In January 2014 Members of Cambridge City Council Licensing Committee agreed that consultation with relevant organisations be carried out to ascertain whether or not it would be more efficient to require certification of fitness to be undertaken by the individual driver's GP, who has immediate access to their medical records.
- 3.6 After discussion with and following advice from the Local Medical Committee, the possibility of drivers using their own GP for the medical assessment could be an alternative but not obligatory.
- 3.7 From 3 to 23 November 2014, consultation took place with the Taxi Trade and also NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to seek views and suggestions on the proposal to widen the range of service for drivers. The CCG circulated the document to its members early in November. The consultation documents can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.8 Four responses were received and these are summarised in Appendix B
- 3.9 Following the consultation, it is proposed that along with the already nominated approved medical practitioner, the Council allows drivers the option of using their own GP (if they are familiar with the Group II Medical Standards). This would provide more flexibility and, potentially, a more robust service.

3.10 In line with the process change, 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. The proposed assessment form and certificate can be found at Appendix C.

3.11 Discussions have been taking place with local medical practices, with a view to designating additional practitioners on the approved list to undertake examinations where GPs are not able to do so, as a means of broadening the availability of tests for drivers.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 As consultation has already taken place, as mentioned in 3.7, no further consultation is required.

5. OPTIONS

5.1 Retain the existing arrangement of using only the medical practitioner on the Council's approved list, to undertake certification of drivers' fitness, in accordance with the Group II standards for C1 vehicles.

5.2 To maintain a Council approved list of medical practitioners, to undertake certification of drivers' fitness in accordance with the Group II standards for C1 vehicles and also allow the drivers' GPs to undertake certification of drivers' fitness in accordance with the Group II standards for C1 vehicles, with the new arrangement coming into effect on 1st April 2015.

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 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 to be paid by the driver, if a change is made.

(b) **Staffing Implications**
There should be no significant staffing implications

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

Nil

(d) **Environmental Implications**
Nil

(e) **Consultation and communication**
Nil

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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