

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date and Time: FRIDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2017, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER, APPLETREE COURT,
LYNDHURST

Telephone enquiries to: Lyndhurst (023) 8028 5000
023 8028 5588 - ask for Melanie Stephens
Email: melanie.stephens@nfdc.gov.uk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Committee's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
 - (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item.
- Speeches may not exceed three minutes. Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above.

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2017 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. TRAINING FOR THE TAXI TRADE - PRESENTATION (Pages 1 - 4)

To receive a presentation on the changes to the taxi driver knowledge test including a new safeguarding model.

5. LICENSING SERVICE PLAN (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive an update on the future direction of Licensing Services.

6. DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS

- (a) The scheme of delegations relating to the licensing functions requires updating to replace the words “licensing officer” with “Licensing Manager” following the recent restructure of the Environment and Regulation Service. It is therefore

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council’s scheme of delegation of powers to officers be amended replacing the words “licensing officer” with “Licensing Manager”.

- (b) To delegate the function of determining Hackney Carriage and Private Hire and Operator licence applications made under S.51 & S.55 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to a Sub-Committee of three members drawn from the General Purposes & Licensing Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee delegate its function of determining Hackney Carriage and Private Hire and Operator licence applications made under S.51 & S.55 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to a Sub-Committee of three members drawn from the General Purposes & Licensing Committee.

Source:
S. 51 & S.55 Local Government
(Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

To:
Sub-Committee consisting of
three members taken from
the General Purposes &
Licensing Committee

7. DATES OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The Committee is requested to fix its meeting dates for 2018/2019. The following dates are suggested (all Fridays at 9.30 a.m.):-

8 June 2018
7 September 2018
16 November 2018
11 January 2019
8 March 2019

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To: **Councillors**

S J Clarke (Chairman)
L R Puttock (Vice-Chairman)
G C Beck
G R Blunden
S P Davies
Ms L C Ford
R L Frampton
A T Glass

Councillors

L E Harris
Mrs P Jackman
J M Olliff-Cooper
D N Tungate
A S Wade
J G Ward
Mrs P A Wyeth

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GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2017

TRAINING FOR THE TAXI TRADE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on amendments to the Drivers Awareness Test (DAT) which must be passed by all applicants prior to the Licensing Authority issuing them with a drivers licence.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Licensing Authority must not grant a taxi or private hire vehicle driver's licence unless it is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. The test involves assessing the applicant's character, health, local knowledge of the area and understanding of their responsibilities as a licensed driver.
- 2.2 The Driver Awareness Test which has been renamed as the Driver Knowledge Test has been reviewed and updated for a number of reasons; mainly to include a safeguarding element to the test and to modernise the geographical knowledge section. Amending some of the questions has also improved consistency with other Hampshire Authorities which has removed the perceived view that this Council's test was easier to pass.
- 2.3 A compulsory safeguarding module has been added following the Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham which indicated that licensed vehicles played a prominent role in the issues investigated. There is no legal requirement or standardised format or content for this training and therefore this Council has decided to design and implement a safeguarding training pack.
- 2.4 The amendments to the test will ensure a robust licensing scheme that protects safety by driving up standards, is a real benefit to our communities and maintains public confidence in the trade.

3. THE NEW KNOWLEDGE TEST

- 3.1 The Driver Knowledge Test consists of three sections which cover the following areas:

- Law and regulation 10 questions
- General driving, highway code, basic English and numeracy skills & geographical knowledge 40 questions
- Safeguarding (scenario based) 10 questions

- 3.2 The safeguarding training is an e-learning package designed by the Council's Partnership Interventions Manager (Brian Byrne) and includes knowledge and assessment modules. Each candidate is taught by a series of scenarios and their understanding is then assessed to ensure they could take appropriate action should the need arise.

- 3.3 The Driver Knowledge Test is completed by applicants at Appletree Court. The time allocated to complete the test is 1 hour 20 minutes. The pass mark is 80% for all three sections, with failure to pass any one section resulting in a failed test.

Applicants have 3 attempts to complete and pass every section in the test in one sitting. If they are unsuccessful on the third attempt, they cannot re-take the test for a period of 12 months. Although some questions are repeated, many are different throughout all three tests in order to reduce the likelihood of information sharing between applicants.

- 3.4 All applicants are required to pay for the test before booking and failure to attend, late arrival or failure to cancel the booking within 2 clear working days of the test will result in the fee being forfeited.

4. REVIEW OF THE TEST

- 4.1 The new Driver Knowledge Test was trialled in March and April by officers within the service particularly to ensure that the IT system would support the e-learning module. Feedback was provided and a few minor amendments were implemented.
- 4.2 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Statement of Principles, Part K, refers to passing the Driver Awareness Test as a pre-qualifying condition for a drivers licence. The Knowledge Test has been reviewed and amended to address the national safeguarding issues, in advance of the full policy review. This will take place over the following 6 months and will involve consultation with all stakeholders.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The feedback from partners who have reviewed the safeguarding training has been very positive. All have recognised the need for training to ensure drivers and applicants understand issues around safeguarding and vulnerable adults, as well as acting as the eyes and ears of the community to assist in the prevention of similar issues.
- 5.2 The safeguarding module was presented to the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board in June by the Council's Chief Executive and was recognised as an excellent training package to raise standards and give greater customer confidence. It is anticipated that other Hampshire Authorities will adopt this package which will improve consistency in the application process across the region.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY, FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity, financial or environmental implications for the committee to consider resulting from this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Committee endorse the new knowledge test with the safeguarding training module and recognise the positive outcome of implementing it with all new applicants.

7.2 That the Committee support the future roll-out of the safeguarding training for all existing drivers and operators.

For further information contact:

Joanne McClay
Service Manager
023 8028 5588
joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk

Brian Byrne
Partnership Interventions Manager
023 8028 5588
brian.byrne@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers

None

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GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2017

LICENSING SERVICE PLAN 2017/2018

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Licensing Service Plan for 2017/2018 which highlights the priorities for the team until the end of March 2018.

2. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2017/2018

- 2.1 The Licensing Service Plan (attached in Appendix 1) highlights the priorities for the licensing team over the next 7 months and how this work delivers the vision and priorities in the Corporate Plan. The key objectives for the service are to:
- Ensure all licenses are processed within the statutory timescales
 - Update the driver knowledge tests (see separate report on this matter)
 - Produce a new taxi licensing policy and issue it for consultation
 - Redesign all licences to reduce likelihood of fraud and enhance their appearance
 - Provide on-line payment facilities for annual taxi/liquor licence fees
 - Review the animal welfare licensing process and bring the inspections back in-house
 - Produce a list of standardised license conditions to aid responsible authorities and manage expectations of applicants and their statutory responsibilities
 - Review the skills within the licensing team to improve resilience and identify any training needs
 - Produce monthly 'flash' reports which summarise achievements, performance indicators and the forward work plan
- 2.2 The Service Plan identifies the lead officer for each objective, the timescale for completion and the outcomes and benefits of the objectives. The Service Plan will be reviewed quarterly to ensure the team are on target with the actions.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the Committee to consider within this report.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no environmental, crime and disorder or equality and diversity implications as a result of this report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Committee endorse the priorities set out in the Licensing Service Plan for this financial year.

For further information contact:

Joanne McClay
Service Manager
023 8028 5588
joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers

None

SERVICE PLAN FOR 2017-2018

Aim of service: To provide an efficient and effective licensing service, in accordance with all relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Council policies.

	Subject	Link to corporate objectives	Objective	Lead officer	Timescale to complete	Milestones	Comments/ Benefits
1.	General	Service outcomes for the community	All licences processed within statutory timescales	Christa	April 2018	Ongoing departmental target	To meet statutory requirements
2.	Taxis	Helping local businesses grow	Finalise the driver knowledge tests	Christa	April 2018	All of knowledge test to be in electronic format	Consistency and fairness of questions.
3.	Taxis	Helping local businesses grow	Produce a new draft Taxi policy and issue for consultation	Christa	April 2018	Include elements that have been discussed by the trade, Members, officers to update, in-line with national guidance	To ensure policy is relevant and supports decisions
4.	Taxi and alcohol licensing	Helping local businesses grow	Redesign of driver, vehicle, operator, personal and premises licences	Christa	April 2018	Embossed licences, different paper and print.	Prevent fraud and enhanced appearance
5.	Alcohol licensing and Gambling	Helping local businesses grow	On-line payment facility set up for annual fee payments	Christa Sheryl IT	April 2018	Customers able to pay at any time	Enhanced customer experience. Improved efficiency for licensing team.
6.	Animal Welfare	Living/working within our means	Bring inspections in-house and set up new processes	Christa Rachel Di	April 2018	Knowledge available in house for new/renewal/ queries/ complaints/pre-application advice	Officers available for queries, inspections, complaints plus no external costs

7.	Alcohol licensing	Service outcomes for the community	Review licence conditions and produce a “standard suggested conditions” document for use by applicants, police, EP and Licensing	Sarah/Christa	April 2018	Clear and consistent conditions for licences, to assist with understanding of licence holders and compliance officers	Conditions should be fit for purpose (enforceable, and proportionate).
8.	Team Skills Review	Living/working within our means	Look at team skills to improve resilience across the department and review licensing enforcement role.	Christa	April 2018	Review roles within the team.	Promotes resilience for absence cover and reviews roles within the team.
9.	Flash reports	Protecting the local character of our place	Produce monthly flash reports	Christa/team	April 2018	Communication throughout	Ensures Service Manager and team and other sections are aware of projects/workload and developments

Priorities

- 1 Helping local businesses grow
- 2 Service outcomes for the community
- 3 Protecting the local character of our place
- 4 Living within our means