

## Appendix 1

### Summary of Consultation Responses

Further to the Licensing Committee asking for the views of the trade and other relevant parties to be obtained regarding the implementation of a knowledge test for the hackney and private hire trade, a consultation has taken place and the summary of responses is below.

The consultation question asked was:

“The Council wants to know your views on the introduction of a driver knowledge test for hackney carriage drivers and private hire drivers. The proposal is to require all new applicants to pass the knowledge test prior to being granted a licence and, for all existing drivers to pass the knowledge test within 12 months of the implementation date”

#### Yes Responses

The responses agreeing to the implementation of the test contained the following supporting statements:

“A knowledge test would be good because it would help to get a more professional service and would attract a more responsible type of person to the trade, maybe even attracting younger drivers”

“Far too many new drivers using satellite navigation for local destinations”

“The Council need knowledgeable taxi drivers for the safety of all passengers. Having the knowledge test would help and justify this. No passenger should feel unsafe with a driver who isn't from the local area or a driver who doesn't know the area”

“Only new drivers should take the test especially drivers from outside the area”

“To be a taxi driver/private hire driver it is essential to have the knowledge of the area – particularly now as the Lake District is a World Heritage site. From my experience visitors are seeking out the less honey pot areas and want the more secluded parts. Local knowledge is essential. Relying on sat nav is not the answer”

“The test should be set in the area that you operate from”

“This will give an enhanced service to users/customers. Concerns are that I would have not a good knowledge of other communities in the borough which I rarely service”

“The knowledge test would provide a better service and the drivers would have a better understanding of the area” (Comments then went on to suggest how the test could be formulated)

“To make sure all customers pay as little as possible”

“For better services and safety of the public”

## No Responses

Many responses appeared to be based on the perception that a knowledge test is to assess the knowledge of the geographical area only. The responses often covered mixed justifications but the main ones have been broken down as follows:

Cost – Many responses were based round existing drivers having already paid for the documents required to obtain a drivers licence and vehicle licence and feeling this is an extra expense which will increase over time. It is unfair for existing drivers having spent the money already on so many documents whereas a new driver could pay for this first and pass and then spend money on the rest of the requirements. One suggestion was that anyone who has held a licence for more than 5 years should qualify for grandfather rights. It is already a long and costly enough process to obtain a licence. Some felt it is irrelevant for badge holders to take it now who have not needed to in the past, that it's a scam to make money from the trade and they pay enough to get licensed.

Officer response – the candidate would have to pay the cost of sitting the test. This is yet to be determined based on the system selected. The proposal at present is that the candidate sits the test once. There is no provision for a refresher test periodically but that is subject to Members decision. There is also no provision for how many times a candidate is allowed to take the test. Some authorities stipulate the number of times it can be taken and not allow it to be taken for 12 months. It is felt inappropriate to restrict the number of times allowed to take the test. If an existing driver has not passed the test during the 12 month transitional period there are licensing penalties they would face.

Exemption for existing drivers – many responses thought existing drivers should be allowed to continue without the need for an extra test but that it would have positive benefits for new drivers particularly ones new to the area. It should be for all those who apply in future and don't currently have a licence.

Officer response – Members have already indicated they wish all drivers to pass the test if implemented. The purpose of the test is to introduce further criteria to ensure that all licensed drivers are fit and proper to hold a licence not just new drivers.

Satellite Navigation – the bulk of the responses referred to the benefits of this technology such as using the shortest routes, drivers not having to memorise routes when the technology will always be up to date. A memorised route may be different, longer or wrong. The area covered by some people are villages, farms or areas in outlying areas not street names so sat nav is a wonderful thing. Modern satellite technology makes the knowledge test obsolete. Some felt it was not necessary this day and age with a google voice direction application or sat nav fitted in the car. Some responses referred to sat nav being part of the driving test now.

Officer response – Whilst there is obviously an increased use of satellite navigation systems, the proposed test would cover more criteria than routes and how to get to locations. This is not the only part of the test.

Booking systems – Application based bookings and despatch inclusive of maps makes the test pointless. The distinction between hackney and private hire needs more clarity and observation. As more apps roll out the difference is becoming more blurred. Uber will not go away and there will be more.

Officer response – The test will not be restricted to routes

Geographical area – Allerdale is a vast area and people tend to work in exclusive areas. If introduced it should be based on where the driver proposes to work from. Allerdale is too big an area to do a knowledge test on.

Officer response – It is not viable to have different tests based on the geographical area where a driver works. The test will be more general and will concentrate on landmarks round the Borough and main roads, not street names in towns. A licensed driver may choose where they wish to work but in reality a driver is licensed for the whole of the Allerdale area not just a single town or location.

Contract work – Several responses were received from drivers who only do contract work or airport work who felt having a knowledge test was unnecessary. The test would not be relevant to the type of work those individuals do and may reduce the number of drivers available.

Officer response – The knowledge test is to cover more than routes and directions

Local work – Cumbria is a large county and some drivers just do local runs. Preparation can be done before hand to find the correct route if going somewhere not familiar with. Some visitors provide the address and postcode and a map to show the driver.

Officer response – The knowledge test is to cover more than routes and directions

Part time drivers – Can use sat nav if unsure of where to go.

Officer response – Being satisfied that a person is fit and proper to hold a licence applies to all drivers licensed whatever the nature or duration of their work

Medical Conditions – Response relating to the difficulty of doing the test due to conditions such as dyslexia.

Officer response – Individual circumstances would always be considered and the relevant assistance given

Alternative training suggestion – for minibus drivers to do MIDAS training. Very informative and useful and more valuable to increase awareness of safety issues

Cap on drivers – Suggestion that this would be more effective than a test.

Officer response – Not legally allowed

Recruitment of drivers – is already difficult without putting more hurdles in place. There would be insufficient drivers to effectively service the customer demand. Knowledge comes with experience.