

## LICENSING COMMITTEE – 11TH OCTOBER 2011

### Report of the Strategic Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration and Regulatory Services

#### ITEM 6 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING – PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE DRIVER QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

##### 1. Purpose of the Report

To consider an amendment to the current requirement to obtain a BTEC/NVQ qualification prior to the renewal of a Hackney or Private Hire Drivers Licence, to the requirement to obtain a suitable, relevant, recognised and accredited qualification.

##### 2. Recommendations

1. That the educational requirements for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers be amended to obtaining a suitable, relevant, recognised and accredited qualification.
2. That it be recommended to Council that the Head of Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to determine whether qualifications meet the educational requirements for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

##### 3. Reasons

1.&2. To offer greater flexibility to licensed drivers to obtain a suitable qualification.

##### 4. Background

At the Regulatory Committee meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005, under item 31, it was resolved:

that all drivers pass the BTEC qualification within 2 years.

Following this, at the Licensing Committee meeting of the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006, under item 12, it was resolved:

that an extension to the time limit for a taxi driver to obtain the BTEC Level 2 Qualification from two to three years be approved;

A further amendment was made to the qualification requirement at the Licensing Committee meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010, under item 16 where it was resolved:

that the educational requirements for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers be amended to include the NVQ level 2 in Passenger Transport as an alternative to the current requirement for the BTEC qualification only, provided that this NVQ contains the BTEC qualification as an element of the qualification.

## 5. Current Situation

The previous requirements relate to the NVQ and BTEC levels 2 industry standard qualifications. These have now been superseded by the Qualification Curriculum Framework (QCF) and updated BTEC. Presently, the course is offered locally by Stoke College, and under arrangements brokered by Licensing Staff, the classroom element of the course takes place at the Bangladesh Social Association premises in Loughborough. Officers understand there is an increase in the number of qualifications available to the taxi trade.

In the light of this expansion of qualifications for the trade, officers seek approval to be able to accept suitable qualifications, obviating the need to refer to Committee each time a new qualification is introduced. However, any qualification accepted by the Licensing section would be at a minimum of the equivalent of a level 2 BTEC qualification. This, more flexible, approach will also provide more choice for drivers while ensuring that there is still a requirement for them to have a suitable qualification.

## 6. Financial Implications

There are currently no financial implications to drivers who choose to obtain the qualification through Stoke College – the course is offered free. However, the funding will cease from September 2012, when drivers will have to pay course fees. There are no financial implications for the Council.

## 7. Risk Management

No risks have been identified relating to this decision.

Background Papers:                   Regulatory Committee 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005, item 31  
  Licensing Committee 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006, item 12  
  Licensing Committee 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010, item 16

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