

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places	Licensing and Public Safety Committee	14 September 2011

## TAXI / PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Members approval for the changes made to the medical examination procedure for taxi and private hire drivers.

### RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that Members approve the revised medical examination procedure relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licences.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

2. Taxi and private hire drivers are required to undertake a medical examination to demonstrate that they are fit to drive. The current medical examination form requires the applicant to present to a general medical practitioner (GP) for an assessment of their fitness to drive under DVLA Group 2 standards. Evidence indicates that the majority of GP's may not be experienced or conversant with these complex standards.
3. The Councils current examination form has been revised by a medical professional competent with Group 2 standards and is attached at Appendix A. It is proposed that where any concerns relating to the drivers' fitness are highlighted by the GP, that the examination form will be referred to a medical professional conversant with DVLA Group 2 standards.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

4. To ensure that the medical examination procedure for taxi and private hire drivers is robust and fit for purpose.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. To object to the proposed changes and revert to the current medical examination procedure.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	

## Appendix A

Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	√
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### BACKGROUND

7. All taxi and private hire driver are required to undertake a medical examination on application and at specified times when they meet a certain age. The medical must be carried out by a general medical practitioner (GP) who has access to their records of medical history so that an informed decision can be made regarding the applicants fitness to drive.
8. It is appropriate for taxi and private hire drivers to have more stringent medical standards than those applicable to normal car drivers because:
  - they carry members of the general public who have expectations of a safe journey;
  - they are on the road for longer hours than most car drivers; and
  - they may have to assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.
9. As recommended by the Department of Transport- "*Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing- Best Practice Guidance*" (March 2010) and approved by members at Licensing and Public Safety Committee in September 2010, all drivers in Chorley are required to be assessed against the "Group 2" medical standards. Members should note that these are the same standards as applied by DVLA to the licensing of lorry and bus drivers.
10. Although the vast majority of GP's are qualified to assess whether a person is medically fit, they may not be experienced or conversant with the complex Group 2 medical standards for fitness to drive.
11. Our current medical examination form requires GP's to specifically state whether the applicant they are assessing are fit to drive. Officers are aware of a case where an applicant was informed by his usual GP that they were unable to carry out the assessment as they acknowledged they were not competent to assess under the relevant standards.
12. The Councils current medical examination form has been revised by Dr G Parker, Consultant Occupational Physician at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and is attached at Appendix A. Essentially; there is no material change in the examination form as the questions are standard for a Group 2 assessment. However, the questions now clearly demonstrate where there may be an issue that requires the applicant to undergo further medical assessment by someone competent to assess their fitness to drive.
13. It is proposed that on receipt of a completed medical examination form, Public Protection Officers will establish whether any of the medical checks have been ticked "Yes". If this is the case, the paperwork will then be referred to a competent Group 2 medical professional. They will review the medical examination form and provide the Council with a report as to the applicants' fitness to drive. Research suggests that this will cost in the region of £100 per referral. The Council will bear the cost of this referral and it will be recovered within the current licensing fee structure.
14. On the recommendation of the Group 2 medical professional, the applicant may be required to undertake additional medical assessments to establish their fitness to drive. If this is the case, the applicant will be notified and they will be required to meet any further cost incurred.
15. It is estimated that the Council will refer approximately 6 medical assessments each year.
16. It is anticipated that the majority of taxi and private hire drivers will not be affected by the proposed changes unless their medical assessment form highlights that there are concerns regarding their fitness to drive.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

17. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included

Finance		Customer Services	
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## Appendix A

Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	√	No significant implications in this area	

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

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