

## **Officer Review of Consultation Responses**

### **Question 1. Requirement to subscribe to the DBS Update Service and undertake six monthly checks.**

Concerns were raised in relation to possible additional costs for licence holders signing up to the DBS update service.

**Officer response:** The annual fee for the DBS update service is currently £13, therefore this fee is considerably less than the cost for licence holders to undertake a DBS check every six months at £60 per check. This implementation in the long term provides a significant financial benefit to licence holders and is far more cost effective than the current process.

The annual update fee is also less than licence holders would have to pay to undertake three yearly DBS checks, so again there is an overall financial benefit to licence holders.

Existing licence holders or new applicants who are already signed up to the DBS update service, will not be required to undergo a new or further DBS check as part of their application.

Concerns were also raised in relation to the administrative burden of having to undertake additional six-monthly DBS checks.

**Officer response** - The administration of undertaking six monthly BDS checks will be undertaken by Licensing Team members and not licence holders.

### **Question 2. Use of the National Register of Revocations and Refusals (NR3).**

Concerns were raised in relation to the use of the national register (NR3).

**Officer response** – The use of the national register will not take away the rights of an existing licence holder, or a new applicant to have their individual case referred to the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee for consideration. This process will remain in place.

### **Question 3. Making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service.**

Concerns were raised in relation to the Council making referrals to the DBS.

**Officers response** – There will be a robust system in place for the Council to make referrals to the DBS service. Any referral will only take place once a decision has been taken by the Licensing Sub-Committee to either refuse or revoke an existing licence.

### **Question 7. English Language Proficiency.**

Concerns were raised in relation to the level of English language proficiency.

**Officers response** – The level of English language skills that will be required, will be that which is suitable and sufficient to the role being performed, this will be guided by the relevant part of the statutory standards. This will mean that applicants will need to have conversational English.

This will form part of the competency certificate but should be no more onerous than the current knowledge and skills tests taken by current drivers.

### **Question 12. Criminology Checks for Private Hire Operators.**

Concerns were raised in relation to the cost of DBS checks for operators.

**Officers response** – There will be no additional cost, as Operators are already required to undergo a DBS check.

### **Question 13. Worcestershire Taxi and Private Hire Competency Certificate (new applicants).**

Most responses were in support of the introduction of additional training for new driver applicants.

The training requirements will apply to new applicants only and Officers will work very closely with training providers to ensure costs are kept to a minimum.

### **Question 14. Duration of Private Hire Operator Licences (5 years).**

Concerns were raised in relation to the extended duration of the private hire operator licence.

**Officers response** - Section 55 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 says the following in respect of private hire operator licences:

“Every licence granted under this section shall remain in force for five years or for such lesser period, specified in the licence, as the district council think appropriate in the circumstances of the case”.

The proposal in the draft policy is therefore in line with legislative requirements.

However as part of the new proposed standards, there is also a proposal to introduce refunds for surrendered licences, which should address this concern should the situation arise where an operator wishes to surrender a licence midterm. This again is a positive introduction for licence holders.

**Question 15. Issuing new vehicle licences after automatic revocation under section 68 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.**

**Officers response** - It has been noted that some respondents may have misinterpreted the above standard.

This standard only related to existing licensed vehicles which have been suspended by officers, due to being unfit as a result to mechanical failure or accident damage and where any repairs may take longer than the current legal 2 month limit. It serves as a fast track method to get those vehicle licence holders back on the road.

**Question 31. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Penalty Points Scheme.**

A respondent has suggested that the penalty points scheme should be updated to include engine idling at taxi ranks.

**Officers response** – This issue has been addressed and is now included in the revised penalty points scheme being proposed.