

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Licensing Committee – Tuesday, 01 June 2010

### Consideration of maintaining the knowledge test for grant application for a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Licence

#### Report of the Licensing Officer, Olivia Walton

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Ken Hayward))

#### 1. Executive Summary

The Licensing Sub-Committee is asked to consider whether the requirement for a Knowledge Test being carried out for all new Hackney Carriage/ Private Hire Driver applicants prior to receiving their Licence should remain in place

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The current Knowledge Test has been in place for several years. The questions have remained the same to my knowledge since 2007. A copy of the current Knowledge Test is at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The Knowledge Test is an oral test, which is carried out by a Licensing Officer. The Test is split into 2-sections; section one consists of fourteen questions based on the shortest route from point A to point B. The fourteen questions are split into three areas that make up the Taunton Deane Borough, seven questions on Taunton, four on Wellington and three on Wiveliscombe.
- 2.3 Section two consists of eight questions on the rules and regulations set out by the Licensing Department conditions for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles, Drivers and Private Hire Operators.
- 2.4 The applicant is asked a maximum of five questions from each section, and has to answer a minimum of three questions correct in each section. If the applicant fails then they must re-sit the section of the test that they failed.

- 2.5 This report outlines the pros and cons of the Knowledge Test in order for the Committee to decide whether we should continue with the Test.

### **3. (Full details of the Report)**

- 3.1 The reason for the Knowledge Test is to ensure that all new applicants, read, understand and are aware of conditions, rules and regulations set by Taunton Deane Borough Council that will be attached to their licence. By putting all new applicants through this test it is felt that the Licensing Department will receive fewer complaints from members of the public.
- 3.2 The Test process begins with an invite letter being sent to the applicant requesting that they come to the Deane House to take the test. This process is carried out as soon as all the information required for the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence has been received such as; both references, satisfactory medical certificate and the Disclosure Application Form from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- 3.3 Test is usually booked to take place 5-days from the date that all the information required has been received. The reason for this is so the applicant receives sufficient notification so that they can ensure they have enough time to prepare for the test. The test can take between 15 – 20 minutes to be completed.
- 3.4 The time it takes to complete the test is dependant on how many questions have to be asked and how many question the applicant may want to ask the Officer at the end of the Test. The test does involve a certain amount of Officer time and can also further delay the applicant from starting work, their licence to act as a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver shall not be issued until they have passed the Knowledge Test.
- 3.5 There has been an occasion when an answer in the Knowledge Test was proven to be incorrect. In Section One the answer for the shortest route from A to B was suggested not to be the shortest route available. The newly suggested route was tested by a Licensing Officer and was proven to be correct. This has posed the question of ‘are the other answers in the Test correct?’ These other routes have not yet been re-tested.
- 3.6 During the last few years Satellite Navigation Instruments have become very popular and cheaper to buy. It is very common to be asked by an applicant attending a Knowledge Test why we are testing them on routes when in reality if they did not know where they were going or picking up from they would simply turn to their ‘Sat-Nav’ for directions.
- 3.7 At present, South Somerset and Mendip District Council do not insist on applicants for Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers’ Licences complete a Knowledge Test prior to their licences being granted. However, Mendip District Council are looking at introducing a Knowledge Test where the applicants are only tested on the conditions that will be attached to their licences according to rules and regulations set by Mendip District Council and not on their knowledge of getting from A to B.

- 3.8 It is felt that by having a Knowledge Test at Taunton Deane, this will deter applicants who may not be as committed to becoming a taxi driver as others.
- 3.9 If the Committee decide to keep the Knowledge Test as part of the process of applicants gaining their Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers' Licence, it is strongly felt by the Licensing team that a new Test should be devised to include a larger selection of questions and the questions being produced from the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Drivers, Vehicle and Operator Handbook. (A copy of this handbook is available on the Taunton Deane Website).

#### **4. Finance Comments**

- 4.1 None

#### **5. Legal Comments**

- 5.1 The legal implications are set out within the report.

#### **6. Links to Corporate Aims**

- 6.1 Although difficult to link to a specific corporate aim the Knowledge Test will show that all our licensed drivers are aware of conditions attached to their licences which should make them safer, conscientious drivers and assist in the delivery of the overall Corporate Strategy. Promote corporate strategy of the Council

#### **7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

- 7.1 None identified.

#### **8. Equalities Impact**

- 8.1 Not required.

#### **9. Risk Management**

- 9.1 No risks identified.

#### **10. Partnership Implications**

- 10.1 None identified.

## 11. Recommendations

- 11.1 Keep the Knowledge Test but update **ALL** questions in both Section One and Two
- 11.2 Licensing preferred option - Keep the Knowledge Test but **ONLY** Section 2 with new questions added from the new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook.
- 11.3 Remove the requirement for a Knowledge Test.

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HC & PH Drivers  
Knowledge Test

Answer Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1

Number	Question Asked	Answer Correct	Answer Wrong	Didn't Know
1.1				
1.2				
1.3				
1.4				
1.5				
1.6				
1.7				
1.8				
1.9				
1.10				
1.11				
1.12				
1.13				
1.14				
1.15				

## Section 2

Number	Question Asked	Answer Correct	Answer Wrong	Didn't Know
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
2.4				
2.5				
2.6				
2.7				
2.8				



HC & PH Drivers  
Knowledge Test

Questions & Answers

**Section 1  
Taunton**

1.1

**1.2 Bus Station to New Barn Park, Galmington.**

Tower Street, right at roundabout along Park Street then onto Trull Road or Parkfield Road then turn right onto Galmington Road. Left onto College Way, Right onto Queensway - New Barn Park is on the left.

**1.3 Railway Station to Musgrove Park Hospital, Galmington.**

Down onto Station Road, turn left, carry on along Station Road. At lights follow Bridge Street into the town. Right at the Roundabout, along Corporation Street. Straight along Park Street, bear left onto Cann Street and follow the road to the right and go down Compass Hill. Turn Left onto Parkfield Road and right onto Parkfield Drive. The hospital is at the end of the road.

**1.4 Asda's to Eastwick Road, Priorswood.**

Turn left out of Asda's and join Toneway. At the roundabout turn right onto the Obridge Viaduct. Straight over the next roundabout onto Eastwick Rd.

**1.5 Council Offices, Belvedere Road to Hudson Way, Staplegrove.**

Out of the Council Offices, turn right onto Station Road. At lights turn right onto Staplegrove Road. After railway bridge turn Left onto Bindon Road and then turn right into Hudson Way.

**1.6 SCAT, Wellington Road to Stoke Rd, Holway.**

Turn right onto Wellington Road, bear right at Park Street, carry on past the Police Station. Turn right onto Silver Street and carry onto South Road. Turn left onto Stoke Road.

**1.7 Corporation Street Taxi Rank to Wellsprings Road, Rowbarton.**

From Corporation Street, left at roundabout onto North Street. At lights bear right onto Station Road and carry straight on onto Kingston Road, then turn Right onto Wellsprings Road.

**1.8 Darby Way, Bishops Lydeard to Taunton Town Centre.**

From Darby Way turn left into Bishop's Lydeard. Turn left into Hither Mead then left again and join the A358 into Taunton. Turn Left at Cross Keys roundabout and carry straight over the next roundabout. At the roundabout with the Staplegrove Inn on the left, turn Right. Follow Staplegrove Road all the way to the Traffic Lights. Use right hand lane, carry on into town over the bridge into the Town Centre.

## Wellington

### 1.9 Greenway Road, Rockwell Green to the Police Station.

Turn Right onto Rockwell Green and at the lights turn Left and drive into the centre of Wellington. Turn Left onto North Street and then Right onto Victoria Street Police Station on the right.

### 1.10 Co-Op to Mill Stream Gardens, Tonedale.

Turn left onto Longforth Road then either right onto Victoria Street or straight on onto Station Road. Turn Left into Mill Stream Gardens.

### 1.11 Priory to Wellington Hospital.

From Priory onto main road into Wellington. Turn Left into South Street and then right at the roundabout into Bulford. Hospital on the left.

### 1.12 Courtfields School to Andrew Allen Road.

Turn Right onto main road then turn left at the lights onto Pope's Lane.  
Turn Left into Andrew Allen Rd

## Wiveliscombe

### 1.13 D Angers Lion to the Three Horse Shoes, Langley Marsh.

Turn right onto Ford Road and then left onto Burges Lane. Turn right onto North Street and carry on to Langley Marsh. The Three Horse Shoes is on the Right.

### 1.14 Jews Lane to the Doctors Surgery, Milverton.

Turn left onto West Street & at the Lights turn left onto Church Street. Carry on same road until the Milverton roundabout and turn Right. Straight on towards the centre of Milverton/Fore Street. Turn left into Creedwell Close and then right to the Doctors Surgery.

### 1.15 Plain Pond to Kingsmead School.

Turn onto North Street & turn left onto High Street. Straight across lights and follow road - the School is on the Left.

## Section 2

- 2.1 What safety checks should you carry out to your vehicle before starting work?
- 2.2 What two items are you required to carry in your vehicle at all times and where would you find them?
- 2.3 Where should your drivers badge be displayed?
- 2.4 You turn up to a customer's house but there is no one outside. How do you let them know that you are there?
- 2.5 You've had a road traffic accident. When and who do you report this to?
- 2.6 You have just dropped off a customer and on checking the taxi you find a camera. The customer has gone, what do you do next?
- 2.7 You are parked up in the front of the taxi rank. A lady gets into the taxi behind you instead of yours. What do you do?
- 2.8 You're driving a wheelchair assessable taxi and a wheelchair bound customer would like you to take them home. It's late, it's been a long day, and you don't feel like taking them. Can you refuse to take them?