

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
13 JANUARY 2011

CHAUFFEUR BADGE
(Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council at present issues 3 types of driver licence: Dual Driver, Private Hire Driver and Home to School Driver. Each licence requires the driver to have a certain skill set and there are requirements set so that an applicant can demonstrate these skills.
- 1.2 The Council has been approached to provide a further variation for use by drivers who by the nature of work and conduct regard themselves as Chauffeurs.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the present time, if a person wishes to be a private hire driver, that is the driver of a licensed private hire vehicle, they must hold either a private hire driver licence or a dual driver licence. A dual driver licence permits a licensed person to, in addition, drive a Hackney Carriage.
- 2.2 A private hire vehicle is a vehicle that is licensed to transport a person for hire or reward and the booking must be made in advance of the journey. A private hire vehicle cannot ply for hire that is picking up people who have hailed them in the street. To be granted a private hire driver licence there are a number of conditions that must be satisfied and included in this is a test of the knowledge of the local area. This requires the driver to know the location of important venues, such as pubs, churches, businesses, etc, together with knowledge of the location of important roads within an area of a Borough. This knowledge is deemed necessary as often charges for a journey will be calculated by reference to a meter in the vehicle or the trip meter within the odometer.
- 2.3 There are a group of drivers who work exclusively for corporate account customers and drive customers throughout the UK. The charging rate is not determined by reference to mileage but by the nature of a contract. Additionally the work carried out within Bracknell Forest is negligible in comparison to other work contracted.
- 2.4 The companies who specialise in this corporate work tend to apply for and be granted a "dispensation certificate" for their private hire vehicles. This dispensation exempts them from having to fix a private hire licence plate to the vehicle. Additionally the vehicle has to be an executive class model with increased internal measurements to provide improved levels of comfort for passengers.
- 2.5 It is common for these specialist firms to recruit drivers from areas outside of Bracknell to service corporate clients across London and the South of England. The vast majority of these drivers will only visit Bracknell Forest when they are visiting their employer's office. The companies have informed

us that the requirement to have a geographical knowledge of Bracknell Forest is unnecessary for the following reasons:

- The vehicles rarely, if ever, work within the Borough.
- The charge made is not calculated by reference to mileage.
- All vehicle journeys at the time of the booking are programmed by the use of Satellite Navigation equipment.

- 2.6 The Council are also informed by the same companies that this requirement to pass a geographical test often results in the loss of very good calibre drivers in ideal locations because they are often either unwilling or unable to take and pass the test. The drivers often live a long way from Bracknell and are unwilling to learn the geography of the area as they see it as irrelevant and unnecessary for the job they intend to do. Additionally the process can take a considerable period for those willing to try and pass the test, delaying employment for the company and the individual.
- 2.7 The Council have therefore been approached and requested to consider the removal of the requirement to take and pass the test which is based upon the locations of streets or important sites within the borough where a drivers are only going to drive a vehicle that operates under a corporate exemption certificate.
- 2.8 Officers will consult widely with the trade on a proposal to introduce a Chauffeur licence and bring back to members a report on the results of the consultation with recommendations for member's consideration.

Background Papers

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Contact for further information

Robert Sexton, Head of Trading Standards & Licensing - 01344 352580
robert.sexton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Doc Ref