

INFORMATION
(ITEM)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

Our ref: RJS/mae

28 February 2011

Dear

**Consultation on Chauffeur's Badge
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**

The Council has been approached to introduce a new type of private hire driver's licence which would relate solely to those vehicles granted a Dispensation Certificate. I would draw your attention to item 20 in the 2010 Guidance Notes which sets out the criteria for a "Private Hire Vehicle Dispensation". These vehicles must meet certain specifications and they must be engaged solely in chauffeur / corporate / executive work.

It has been suggested that the drivers of these vehicles should not need to take the geographical aspect of the private hire knowledge test as:

- the vehicles rarely, if ever, work within the Borough,
- the charge made is not calculated solely by reference to mileage,
- all vehicle journeys are programmed via Satellite Navigation equipment.

The Council is consulting you to ask:

1. Is it appropriate to exempt drivers who drive solely dispensation vehicles from having to pass a geographical knowledge test of Bracknell Forest?
2. Are there any other scenarios where you feel that a geographical knowledge of Bracknell Forest is not appropriate to the granting of a Private Hire driver licence?
3. Do you have any other comments or views upon the proposal?

I would ask that any comments are received in writing, addressed to myself, no later than 31 March 2011.

Yours sincerely

**R J Sexton
Head of Trading Standards and Licensing**

10/03/11

Mr R Sexton

Head of Trading Standards and Licensing

Bracknell Forest Council

Rg 12 1jd

Consultation on Chauffeurs Badge

Dear Mr Sexton

Further to your letter dated 2/3/2011, reference the above, I find it quite incredible, that this subject has even come up as a topic for consultation. As a badge holder of some 14 years it is my opinion that everyone that applies to the council should take a geographical test, in fact I would go further given the choice and seek to introduce a physical driving knowledge exam to test a full understanding of the Borough. You state in your letter, that that the vehicles concerned, rarely work in the Borough. I do not believe this to be strictly true, though if it is, why are Bracknell Forest Council, getting involved with the licensing of these drivers. Satellite navigation, should be an as well as, not an instead of facility, standards need to be enhanced, not diminished, if the people applying for badges to drive in the Borough, cannot meet the required standard, then they should not be granted a badge in the first place. I feel that any concession on the knowledge test, would be the thin end of the wedge, surely it is a professional image; we want to portray to the public. How could the system of badge usage be possibly monitored effectively, you will end up with people, who have never been near the council sharing the same badge.

Yours Sincerely

Tom Carroll

Badge 142

Robert Sexton

From: Niamh Kelly
Sent: 04 August 2011 13:02
To: Robert Sexton
Subject: FW: Chauffeur Badge Consultation

Rob

Please find below first response from Mike O'Shea, I will save it in the G Drive as will with all replies received.

regards

Niamh

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike O'Shea [mailto:mike.oshea222@btinternet.com]
Sent: 04 August 2011 12:57
To: Niamh Kelly
Subject: Re: Chauffeur Badge Consultation

Hi Niamh

Thanks for your email, sorry I did not respond to your letter dated 28th February but I cannot remember receiving it, however clearly got your email.

With regard to the Council reviewing the need for private hire driver's to take local geographical knowledge test I would agreed that drivers should be exempt on this on the proviso that all private hire cars have fitted Satellite Navigation systems.

Could I raise another issue with regard to the First Aid Course, now that I have attend the course.

I found the course to be tailored to general day to day first aid requirements, for example the instructor informed us what we should looking fore on entering a room and seeing a person laying on the floor, or if somebody was witling wood with a Stanley knife and it slipped slashing their wrists what should we do. Could I suggest that in addition to these examples and as we drive for most of the day in our cars, the course should include information where we could come across road traffic accidents and type of first aid that may be needed in these situations.

Lastly, at the end of my course we were shown a video that summarised the information we had received, then to be told, see you in three years for a refresher course. We left with nothing in the way of documentation or a CD that covered the course material, where those who would be interested, could refer to it at a later date or to remind themselves.

Kind regards

Mike O'Shea - Bray Cars Ltd

--- Original Message -----

From: "Niamh Kelly" <Niamh.Kelly@bracknell-forest.gov.uk>
To: "'Bookings @ UK Chauffeur Network'" <bookings@ukcnltd.com>;
<ravencars@btconnect.co.uk>; <mike.oshea222@btinternet.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 03, 2011 3:22 PM
Subject: Chauffeur Badge Consultation

Hi

Attached please find a letter that was sent out on 28 February 2011, but as yet we have not received any response from you. The Chauffeur Badge would only apply to new applicants and would only mean that they would not have to sit the geographical test all other pre requisites still stand i.e. medical, DSA, knowledge test, CRB and yes the First Aid Course.

In order for us to compile a report for Committee can you firstly advise if this would be of benefit to your company and would you support the change. Also can you advise how many drivers and vehicles you have so that committee can be aware of the cross section it would affect.

Could I please have your responses by Monday 8 August 2011, and if there are any other Operators you wish me to send the consultation please advise. Please be aware that this will only affect new applicants and drivers of dispensation vehicles.

kindest regards

Niamh Kelly
Licensing Officer
Bracknell Forest Council

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Robert Sexton

From: Niamh Kelly
Sent: 08 August 2011 08:30
To: Robert Sexton
Subject: FW: Chauffeur Badge Consultation

Importance: High

FYI - I have saved it on G Drive also.

regards

Niamh

-----Original Message-----

From: Raven Cars [mailto:ravencars@btconnect.com]
Sent: 05 August 2011 10:54
To: Niamh Kelly
Subject: Re: Chauffeur Badge Consultation
Importance: High

Hi Niamh

Apologise For Not Responding Before.

Further To Your E-Mail I Would Like To make The Following Points

1. Yes I Agree That The Drivers Who Are Engaged In Corporate / Chauffeur / Executive Work Should Not Need To Take Bracknell Forest Council Geographical Knowledge Test. This Should Apply To Drivers With Dispensation Licence Vehicles.
2. The Drivers Rarely Work The " Local Circuit" And Are Engaged Mainly In Pick-Ups & Drop-Off To & From Airports & Hotel To Office & Visa Versa.
3. The Charges Are Fixed & Not Per Millage As An Adhog Basis (Metered)
4. All Vehicles Are Equipped With Satellite Navigation Equipment.
5. Most Days The Average Numbers Of Journeys Might Be Between 1 & 6 And Pe-Planed Thus Eliminate The Need Of Bracknell Council Geographical Knowledge

Suggestion

Any New Applicants (Chauffeur / Corporate / Executive) Be Given A Dispensation From Driving Standards Agency Test (DSA). This Is Time & Cost Consuming Exercise. Most Drivers In The Chauffeuring Work Are Over 25Yrs Old & Been Driving For A Long Time.

In Most Cases It Takes Between Four To Eight Weeks For The Appointment , Unless There Is Cancellation , To Come Through. This Is Putting Most Of The New Applicants I Have Come Across. Most Of The Potential Drivers I Have Come Across Are In Their Forties And Have Been Driving For A Long Time.

My Suggestion Would Be That Any New Applicants Applying For A Chauffeur Licence Should Have Held A Full Uk Driving Licence For Minimum 10 Years . This Would Ensure That The Applicant Has Sufficient Driving Experience For The Trade.

Raven Business Services

6 Vehicles (All Mercedes)
All Dispensation Licences
All Fully Licenced Drivers
Operating In Chauffeuring Business For The Last Approx 15 Years

arshi mehr

Kind regards

Arshi Mehr

Raven Business Services

Tel: 01344 860840

Fax: 01344 481400

----- Original Message -----

From: "Niamh Kelly" <Niamh.Kelly@bracknell-forest.gov.uk>

To: <ravencars@btconnect.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 04, 2011 9:19 AM

Subject: Chauffeur Badge Consultation

Hi Arshi

Attached please find a letter that was sent out on 28 February 2011, but as yet we have not received any response from you. The Chauffeur Badge would only apply to new applicants and would only mean that they would not have to sit the geographical test all other pre requisites still stand i.e. medical, DSA, knowledge test, CRB and yes the First Aid Course.

In order for us to compile a report for Committee can you firstly advise if this would be of benefit to your company and would you support the change. Also can you advise how many drivers and vehicles you have so that committee can be aware of the cross section it would affect.

Could I please have your responses by Monday 8 August 2011, and if there are any other Operators you wish me to send the consultation please advise. Please be aware that this will only affect new applicants and drivers of dispensation vehicles.

See you for inspection on Monday 8 August 2011 at 11.30 hours.

From: Tariq Hanif <tariq1704@gmail.com>
Sent: 11 August 2011 10:35
To: Niamh Kelly
Subject: Re: Chauffeur badge Consultation

Thank you for consulting Taylor Hanosn on this issue, here is my contribution.

- 1 Yes. I agree with the question that it appropriate to exepmt the drivers of private who is enagaged solely in corpportae work.
- 2 No, I dont know any other scenario.
- 3 Disp[enation certificate applies to drivers engaged 100% or otherwise, as it may be open to abuse.

Tariq Hanif

Taylor Hanosn

d, Aug 10, 2011 at 5:11 PM, Niamh Kelly <Niamh.Kelly@bracknell-forest.gov.uk> wrote:
Hi Tariq

Now that you a licensed operator you may wish to respond to the consultation it was sent in February but obviously you were not licensed.

Attached please find a letter that was sent out on 28 February 2011. This will only apply to new applicants and would only mean that they would not have to sit the geographical test all other pre requisites still stand i.e. medical, DSA, knowledge test, CRB and yes the First Aid Course.

In order for us to compile a report for Committee can you firstly advise if this would be of benefit to your company and would you support the change.
Also can you advise how many drivers and vehicles you have so that committee can be aware of the cross section it would affect.

Could I please have your response as soon as possible. Please be aware that this will only affect new applicants and drivers of dispensation vehicles.

kindest regards

Niamh

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From: Bookings @ UK Chauffeur Network
Sent: 17 August 2011
To: 'Niamh Kelly'
Subject: Consultation on Chauffeur's Badge

Good Afternoon

In response to your letter regarding the above issue I would like to advise that after discussions with my fleet of drivers, we are all in agreement with the proposal to have an exemption for drivers meeting the requirements stated. We agree that the geographical aspect of the knowledge test is superfluous to our role as chauffeurs.

All bookings are made in advance and dispatched ahead of schedule and are predominantly outside of the local borough.

It would therefore make perfect sense to exclude drivers that fall under this category.

I look forward to further updates regarding this issue,

Kind Regards
Lance Dooley
UK Chauffeur Network

