

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILLICENSING COMMITTEE15 February 2022Report by Civic Government Enforcement OfficerPROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT TO CURRENT POLICY TO REQUIRE ALL NEW PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE HOLDERS ETC TO SIT A KNOWLEDGE TEST**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide background information relative to the proposal to suspend the requirement for all new Private Hire Driver Licence holders and those having held a Private Hire Driver Licence for less than 3 years (as at that date) on renewal to sit a practical and/or theory knowledge test.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That the requirement for all new Private Hire Driver Licence holders and those having held a Private Hire Driver Licence for less than 3 years (as at that date) on renewal to sit a practical and/or theory knowledge test is suspended for a period of 3 months.

BACKGROUND

4. On 16 March 2021, East Renfrewshire Licensing Committee agreed to introduce a policy that would require all new private hire driver licence holders and those having held a private hire driver licence for less than 3 years (as at that date) on renewal to sit a practical and/or theory knowledge test.
5. The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 had recently been amended to introduce the possibility of introducing 'knowledge tests' for Private Hire drivers. Previously knowledge tests were only applicable to Taxi Driver Licence holders. As the vast majority of vehicles/drivers licensed in East Renfrewshire, customer service could be improved by introducing such a test in this council area. Knowledge Tests can take the form of either a written or practical test and are presently conducted by the Council's Civic Government Licensing Standards Officer (enforcement officer). The post-holder is currently on sick leave and consequently there is a backlog of potential private hire driver licence holders. The ability to carry out these tests was also impacted by Coronavirus restrictions which contributed to the current backlog.
6. In the absence of the Civic Government Licensing Standards Officer these tests cannot be conducted at the present time and there is no timescale for his return and the implementation of the knowledge test. To avoid an increasing backlog and to allow more private hire drivers to operate providing a service to assist the recovery of the economy by providing transport for workers particularly in the hospitality sector and for customers to be confident that they have transport at the end of an evening and also to facilitate the drivers to earn an income, it is proposed that this Policy is suspended for a period of 3 months until the 14 May 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

7. That the requirement for all new Private Hire Driver Licence holders and those having held a Private Hire Driver Licence for less than 3 years (as at that date) on renewal to sit a practical and/or theory knowledge test is suspended for a period of 3 months.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

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