

### **EX63. Licensing of Taxis and Private Car Hires**

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on a number of issues relating to the licensing of taxis and private hire cars.

Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act 2010, which relate to wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire cars, were commenced on 6 April 2017. It was proposed that the licensing authority prepare a register of the designated vehicles operating in the area. As such it would become a criminal offence for drivers of designated taxi and private hire cars to refuse to carry passengers in wheelchairs, to fail to provide them with appropriate assistance or to charge them extra.

It was highlighted that 20% of the taxi fleet and 8% of the private hire car fleet were wheelchair accessible; it was proposed that a policy development panel was established to look into this and other taxi and private hire car matters.

In relation to private hire car driver training the report advised that the licensing authority could require a knowledge test be undertaken prior to grant of a license, this process was already in place for taxi drivers.

It was proposed that in terms of the licensing process that current practice was changed so that proof of ownership, appropriate insurance and roadworthiness were no longer required prior to applying.

#### **Decision**

##### **The Executive:-**

- (1) noted the change in legislation and to implement the provisions of section 165 and 167 of the 2010 Act;**
- (2) agreed to instruct officers to:-**
  - (a) notify the relevant operators that all wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire vehicles licensed by Falkirk Council will be considered designated vehicles under section 165 of the Act, and**
  - (b) prepare a register of licensed taxis and private hire cars to show they are wheelchair accessible and therefore considered designated vehicles for the purpose of section 165 of the Act;**
- (3) noted the taxi matters detailed in the report;**
- (4) agreed the implementation of the knowledge test for private hire drivers with immediate effect;**
- (5) agreed to change the order in which new applicants for taxi or private hire present themselves by seeking the reversal of the current policy that requires an applicant to purchase a vehicle before their application is submitted to one where by the car will be the last obstacle to be overcome, and**

- (1) agreed to establish a Policy Development Panel to consider further all matters relating to the taxi trade and invite the trade and service users to participate. The panel will be made up of 5 members, 3 Administration and 2 Opposition members.**