

EX27. Policy Development Panel: Review of Taxi Policies – Interim Report

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services advising on the interim findings of the policy development panel, established to review taxi policies on a variety of areas relevant to the trade.

The panel had concluded the first tranche of its review and its findings and recommendations in relation to taxi medicals and taxi tariff review frequency were set out in the report.

Section 13(4) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 provided any Council to require at any time for a taxi or a private hire car driver to attend a medical examination at the Council's expense. Council policy was that all applicants for taxi and private hire car drivers' licences were required to meet the medical standards of fitness applicable to DVLA Group 2 Licenceholders and that the frequency of testing should also follow the DVLA Group 2 model. This meant that as well as new applicants, each licensed driver would be required to be medically examined at the ages of 46, 51, 56, 61 and annually thereafter.

The number of GP practices which provided the medical examination had decreased over the years with only 1 GP providing the service. The reasons cited by medical practices/ GPs when withdrawing ranged from the low fee paid (£40), to the medical form being outdated and not truly reflective of the current Group 2 medical.

The panel agreed that the frequency of medicals should be adjusted from ages 46, 51, 56, 61 and annually thereafter to 50, 55, 60, 65 and annually thereafter. In addition, it agreed to the medical forms being enhanced to more accurately reflect the current DVLA Group 2 medical examination.

The panel agreed to recommend that a new fee level should be set at £75 per medical. An adjusted medical form was also considered and approved. Regarding procurement, the Council's Procurement officers had indicated that given the nature of the contract, an exemption in the Council's Contract Standing Orders to formal procurement competition could apply and was obtained from the Chief Governance Officer.

The Council had a duty to review taxi fares and scales from time to time. The most recent review concluded last year with a substantial increase agreed following a period of no change. The issue of when a review takes place was discussed with the Taxi Forum and panel. They supported that the review should be regularised and undertaken annually as this would result in a greater certainty in the process for both the trade and officers .

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) to maintain the current policy which requires all new applicants for taxi and private hire driver licences to undergo a "Group 2" style medical assessment;**

- (2) to raise the age at which the 5 yearly and annual medical assessments commence from 46 to 50;**
- (3) to set a fee of £75 subject to regular review of the fee level;**
- (4) to establishing a formalised pool of GPs to carry out the taxi medical assessments by way of a contract;**
- (5) to adopt the amended medical form, and**
- (6) to review the taxi tariff annually.**