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## Chelmsford City Council Regulatory Committee

**DATE: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023**

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### **TAXI POLICY AMENDMENTS**

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Report by: Director of Public Places

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Officer Contact: [Daniel.winter@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.winter@chelmsford.gov.uk), Licensing Lead Officer,  
01245 606317

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#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the Taxi Policy with regards to extenuating circumstances when an applicant who is currently licenced with Chelmsford City Council, has failed all attempts of passing the Green Penny Training course. It is also requested that members consider what action they deem appropriate to existing drivers who have not attempted to pass the training.

#### Recommendations

To consider amendments to the taxi policy in respect of mandatory training.

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#### 1. Background & Introduction

- 1.1 The Taxi Policy was approved by the Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and took effect from 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It remains in force for five years where it will be reviewed but may also be subject to review in response to changes in regulations or guidance or other relevant significant issues which necessitate a review of the policy. The Taxi Policy is available at the following link. Sections 2.8 and 2.10 refer to the training requirement.

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/media/hnyifts2/taxi-licensing-policy.pdf>

- 1.2 The Public Health and Protection Services Manager has specific delegated authority to refuse applications for a 'new' Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence in case of four consecutive failed local knowledge tests and advise applicants that no further application is likely to be granted within twelve months.
- 1.3 The training provider, Green Penny, will test the knowledge of delegates before issuing a pass certificate. The test will comprise of all elements contained within the syllabus including equality, diversity, disability, and safeguarding training. In addition, applicants will also need to complete a topographical (or 'geographical') element, testing their knowledge of roads, places of interest and routes within the district.
- 1.4 Existing holders of a driver's licence will have needed to complete the training within a period of 18 months following the formal adoption of this policy. Where a licence is allowed to expire before re-applying, the full training will be required. A further licence will not be issued until the training has been completed.
- 1.5 Currently the Policy does not detail what action can be taken where a current licensed driver has failed all 4 attempts within the 18 months allocated. In one particular case a driver was issued with a 3-year licence until December 2024, attempted four times to pass the training within the 18 months allowed, but failed all four parts of the topographical element. On two occasions he failed by one point only.
- 1.6 Since the requirement to pass the Green Penny training was introduced for existing drivers 275 drivers have passed. To date there are 22 remaining drivers who have not booked any course to undertake the training with Green Penny. Licensing Officers wrote to these individuals asking them to book a course, only 3 responded to inform the Licensing Authority that they will not be booking their training as they are not intending to renew their licence which are due to expire over the next month.
- 1.7 Members may take the view that those drivers that haven't attempted to undertake the training are not 'fit and proper' and should have their licence suspended

## 2. Options

### 2.1 Members are asked to:

- Delegate authority to the licensing officers to suspend or apply any other action that members see fit, where a licenced driver has failed four attempts at passing the training by some margin.

- To allow the Public Health & Protection Services Manager to apply exemptions to the taxi driver licence test where there are extenuating circumstances and where the failure of such test is marginal.
- Delegate authority to the Public Health & Protection Services Manager to suspend or apply any other action that Members see fit, where a licensed driver has not made any attempt to pass the Green Penny training course and geographical exam with immediate effect.

Appendices:

None

Background reading:

None

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Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None.

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None