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| **REPORT TO** | **ON** |
| **General Licensing Committee** | **20 November 2018** |
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| **TITLE** | **REPORT OF** |
| **Report re. Taxi Qualification Training**  | **Head of Licensing** |

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| Is this report confidential?  | **No** |

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To consider the proposal to bring the taxi qualification training in house.

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**
	1. Agree the proposal
	2. Confirm the fee to be charged
2. **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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| Excellence and Financial Sustainability |  x |
| Health and Wellbeing |  |
| Place |  |

**5. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

5.1 South Ribble Borough Councils Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy requires all applicants to have a BTEC level 2 qualification before consideration will be given to the grant of a licence.

5.2 The policy states at paragraph 5.7;

 Qualifications

 One of the council’s objectives is to have a professional and respected trade. It is important that licensed drivers are not only competent to drive to a high standard, but also that they can deliver customer service and offer appropriate assistance to passengers.

 Before a new applicant is granted a Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire driver’s licence, they must be able to provide original evidence that they have passed the BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Taxi and Private Hire Driver or an appropriate and equivalent Level 2 qualification. Alternatively, a new applicant must have attended and successfully completed any appropriate in – house course to be devised and presented by officers of South Ribble Borough Council, and paid any fee approved by members for administration of this course. Any driver whose licence with the authority has been granted since July 2016 on the basis of them having completed the now –discontinued course provided by the Driver Standards Agency will be given a period of 6 months to register for a suitable training course and 12 months to complete the qualification.

5.3 The taxi trade have made representations through trade forums and during routine dialogue that this part of the policy is particularly onerous and has created difficulties with recruiting new drivers., a large part of the problem seems to be the lack of availability of training providers., many drivers have reported that they can only book on the course in either Liverpool or Manchester. , in addition to the inconvenience of the locations, issues were regularly reported regarding the cancellation of the courses due to a low number of candidates which rendered the course not financially viable. Such delays had a significant impact as drivers could not proceed in the application process until they had achieved the qualification.

**6. PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)**

6.1 The proposal is to offer a course which seeks to cover as many aspects as possible as the BTEC level 2 qualification however it has been essential that some trimming has been needed as the BTEC is usually done over 4 sessions with a minimum of 20 hours directed learning, the fee per delegate is £235.

6.2 The council do not possess the entirety of the competences needed to deliver the course particularly in relation to wheel chair loading and offering appropriate assistance so have secured an informal agreement with a trainer who can support the course by conducting 1 hour classroom based work and a number of hours of practical training and assessment.

6.3 The proposal will be for the Council Officer to deliver the mornings content in a class room based setting, then the afternoon will be covered by Mr Chris Hargreaves in both the classroom and then outside using a vehicle to conduct the practical wheel chair loading and securing of passengers input.

6.4 Qualified trainers tend to be employed by colleges who themselves offer the course, Mr Hargreaves is exactly that and has agreed to assist with the training for a fee of £50 per delegate.

6.5 The proposed fee per delegate is £150, a disbursement of £50 per delegate will be required to cover Mr Hargreaves services and the offer a vehicle has been secured in order to do the practical element of the course, no fee has been requested for the vehicle as the two taxi firms who have offered the vehicle see the course as very progressive and will assist them with the recruitment of drivers.

6.6 In order for the course to be financially viable it would need to be run with a minimum of 6 delegates, therefore creating a formal structure of training dates is very difficult and the course would need to be on a demand basis and offered to the suit the availability of the Council Officer and the trainer.

**7. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 Informal discussion has taken place with Wallbanks, Avacab, Village Cars and South Ribble Taxis. In addition to informal discussion the item was discussed at June’s taxi forum meeting. Whilst there are some people who are neutral about the issues the larger firms and one independent airport operator are particularly enthusiastic about the idea as they believe it will assist with more efficient recruitment of drivers.

**8. Financial implications**

* 1. The proposed fee per delegate is £150 and a disbursement of £50 per delegate will be required to cover the services of an external trainer. There may be other associated costs (such as providing refreshments) but these will be minimal and the net income will contribute to the Council’s costs.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** The policy allows for new applicants to choose to either embark on the BTEC course or an alternative in-house course devised and presented by officers. Officers have now devised a course which is similar to the BTEC level 2 qualification. In line with the policy members are requested to confirm the fee, which will then allow officers to provide the course.

**10. COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

10.1 If the proposal is approved , the implementation of it can be done in principal subject to the appropriate insurance cover being in place.

**11. COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**Please see comments at 9.1 above.**

**12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

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| * **HR & Organisational Development**
* **ICT / Technology**
* **Property & Asset Management**
* **Risk**
* **Equality & Diversity**
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**13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS (or There are no background papers to this report)**

Copy of the proposed PowerPoint presentation and the BTEC level 2 syllabus

**14. APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Power Point Presentation

Appendix B - BTEC Level 2 syllabus

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| Report Author: | Telephone: | Date:  |
| Mark Marshall | 01772 625401 | 12th November 2018 |