

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: 1 NOVEMBER 2016
 title: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A REPLACEMENT FOR THE DVSA TAXI DRIVER TEST
 submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 principal author: MAIR HILL

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval from Committee for a replacement to the DVSA taxi driver test.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives - }
- Corporate Priorities - } Consideration of these issues will promote the Council's aim to be a well-managed Council.
- Other Considerations - }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In September 2015, Committee approved the introduced a requirement that from 1 April 2016 all applicants for a private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence must pass the DVSA taxi driving test before a licence is granted.

2.2 The Council has received notification from the DVSA indicating that it intends to stop offering this test from 31 December 2016. A copy of the letter is enclosed as **Appendix 1** to this report.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The Council has therefore two options; to remove the requirement for such a test or to find a replacement body to carry out the test. The test was introduced to ensure that all applicants for licences have a suitable level of driving ability and also provides training on other aspects or driving safety and service. It is not recommended therefore that the requirement be removed.

3.2 An alternative test is now being provided by Diamond Advanced Motorists ("**DIA**"). This test is already being used by a number of licensing authorities in the surrounding area. Details of the testing requirements, availability and costs are set out in **Appendix 2**. The testing requirements and costs are broadly the same as those required in the DVSA test and DIA have set the cost of the test as slightly lower than the DVSA. Consequently, it is not thought necessary to consult licence holders on the change of testing authority.

3.3 Committee will note that there are two tests available, standard and enhanced. The difference between the two tests is that the enhanced test includes a wheel chair exercise. The enhanced test can only be taken by a driver with a wheel chair accessible

vehicle. It is proposed therefore that where a driver has a wheel chair accessible vehicle they will need to pass the enhanced test to ensure that they are able to load and secure a wheel chair safely. Where a driver does not have a wheel chair accessible vehicle they will take the standard test.

- 3.4 Private Hire operators have already indicated that the availability of the DVSA testing centres has been curtailed in the lead up to its discontinuance and it would appear from the website that it is not possible to make a booking any longer. It is proposed therefore to allow applicants to take either test prior to 31 December 2016 with the DVSA test being replaced by the DIA test thereafter.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – No implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Improved control of licence holders should improve public safety.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – Improved public safety will enhance the Council's reputation.
- Equality & Diversity – no implication identified

5. **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve the DIA as an alternative testing authority for Private Hire and Taxi Driver testing with immediate effect;
- 5.2 Approve DIA as the relevant testing authority for private hire and taxi driver testing from 1 January 2016; and
- 5.3 Approve the testing requirements set out at paragraph 3.3.

MAIR HILL
SOLICITOR

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

For further information please ask for Mair Hill, extension 3216

REF: MJH/Licensing Committee/1 November 2016

APPENDIX 2

Information and Requirements on Diamond Advanced Tests for Private Hire & Taxi Drivers



Diamond is the UK's only government accredited advanced driver and rider development programme wholly delivered by regulated, professional trainers and examiners and available to both individual motorists and fleets alike throughout the UK.

Diamond has for a number of years assisted Councils throughout the UK with their private hire and taxi testing requirements. Diamond has over 100 examiners nationally who can conduct training and/or examining where needed (examiners do not train and examine the same person as this is conflicting). Examiners can work in small or large teams to provide training and examining roles.

All our Diamond examiners have been DVSA accredited with us to take the Diamond tests and they will have signed Terms and Conditions of Office, our DIA code of conduct and be fully paid members of the DIA. All examiners are qualified ADI's (Approved Driving Instructors) and are required to complete the Diamond examiners course, Diamond elite test and Diploma in Driver Education (The diploma is to be completed within 2 years of qualifying).

You will see from our website at www.advancedmotoring.co.uk that the Diamond advanced taxi test costs £78. With regard to Diamond trainers each ADI will charge at their own standard rate per hour as and where necessary.

The Diamond taxi test lasts for 60 minutes and takes place over a route of mixed driving conditions, including motorways where possible. Candidates' driving will be assessed on their eco-safe driving ability and will include performing two out of five reversing manoeuvres (left and right reversing, bay and parallel parking and turn in the road). A pass will be awarded for no more than 6 driving faults, none of which are adjudged to be serious or dangerous. Highway code questions at the beginning of the test, suitable for taxi test candidates can be made compulsory if required.

All our Diamond Examiners need to sign up and complete the following:

- Be a qualified ADI (Approved Driving Instructor).
- Be a fully paid and current member of the DIA (this includes cover for

- our PI/PL policy) and have signed the DIA code of conduct.
- Agreed to and signed our Diamond Terms & Conditions of Office.
- Have completed the Diamond special test.
- Have completed a Diamond Diploma in Driving Education, or working towards it within 2 years of qualifying as a Diamond examiner.

Diamond Advanced Taxi Test requirements:

- A signed declaration that the car is properly insured and taxed for test purposes (declaration is on test report form).
- Preliminary vehicle and eyesight checks.
- 2 manoeuvres (reverse left or right in to a limited opening, reverse parking in to a bay or on the road or a turn in the road/U turn).
- Emergency stop (can be compulsory if required).
- At least 2 questions from the *Highway Code* (this can be specific if required).
- A valid and current driving licence will be checked on the test day together with signature validation.
- If you require an enhanced taxi test to cover wheelchair access requirements, please contact Karen Bransgrove on 020 8253 0120 to discuss the options available.

Road procedure requirements includes looking at the following:

- Making effective use of mirrors and observations.
- Signals (indicators/arm where appropriate).
- Take prompt and effective action on traffic signs, road markings, traffic controllers and other road users.
- Exercise proper care in the use of speed.
- Drive at an appropriate speed and avoid undue hesitancy.
- Safe following distances.
- Make proper use of accelerator, foot brake, clutch, gears, steering, parking brake and centre or side stand for riders.
- Moving away safely and under control.
- Act appropriately at road junctions.
- Judgment when overtaking, meeting and crossing traffic.
- Looking at normal driving position and lane discipline.
- Looking at adequate clearance.
- Taking appropriate action at pedestrian crossings.
- Safe positioning for normal stops.
- Show awareness and planning with regard to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.
- Eco safe driving.
- Make proper use of ancillary controls.

What is the Diamond system based on?

The Diamond Tests are based on the Cardington system of marking, used by the DVSA on their standard driving tests. Diamond, runs a parallel system in

line with DVSA testing requirements and we are accredited on this basis.

The Cardington marking system is an objective system based on grading the seriousness of driving faults, ranging from those not worth marking to dangerous faults. The principles underpinning the system are designed to assess a driver's control of the car and ability to mix with other traffic on the road. The Diamond tests take these principles and apply them more stringently and with a greater emphasis on safety and ecological driving.

Examiners look at faults as follows:

Driving faults – are faults, which are on their own, are not sufficiently serious as to warrant failure to pass the test but are worthy of being recorded.

Serious faults – is a fault, which is potentially dangerous and sufficient to warrant failure on its own.

Dangerous faults – is one that involves actual danger (or damage) to other road users, the candidate, the examiner or property.

Diamond Advanced test driving faults and pass requirements

0-6 (No serious or dangerous fault) Pass

7 plus faults (or one serious or dangerous fault) Fail

How a Diamond test is booked for taxi drivers

A candidate can book a test directly with Diamond at our head office in Crawley on 020 8253 0120, however, ideally we would recommend booking on line at www.advancedmotoring.co.uk/taxi-test.

Payments can be made using a debit or credit card. Once payment has been made the nominated examiner is contacted with instructions to make arrangements with the candidate. A mutually arranged date, time and place will be made between the candidate and examiner. Once the test has taken place a certificate is issued to the candidate. If requested the council can also be notified of a pass/fail result.

We aim to book candidates in for a test within 5-10 working days and in most cases within one week. Contact is initially made within 48 hours (Monday-Friday) once a booking has been made and any queries or problems are referred back to head office for quality control. Taxi drivers are made aware of the procedures for testing at the time of booking with reassurances in terms of time scales and requirements.

Candidates will be given a copy of the test report, which acts as proof of the test having taken place (this is very similar to the official DVSA DL25 form). The certificate for their advanced test for taxi and private hire normally arrives in the post within 2 or 3 working days or will be issued by the nominated examiner on the day of the test itself.

If you would like me to discuss your requirements in more detail I am more

than happy to do this, I am a Diamond examiner myself and I have been an ADI for 15 years.

Contact details:

Karen Bransgrove
Diamond Brand Manager ADI Dip DI
Direct Line Number 020 8253 0120

Taxi and Private Hire Driver Testing

How to choose a test and a provider

Q1

Is the provider accredited/supported by the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency or a recognised accrediting body in driver education?

There are currently only 4 providers of advanced driving and riding assessments available in the UK accredited by the DVSA. Of those, Diamond is the only provider offering accredited assessments and training specifically focused on taxi and private hire drivers. Check whether your assessment provider offers a test accredited, quality assured and regulated by the DVSA and one which is specifically tailored to assess this type of occupational driver.

As well as benefiting from accreditation from the government regulator of driver training and driving standards, Diamond is also a respected authority and accrediting body of driver education in its own right. We accredit a number of training and assessment programmes for drivers and riders across the UK (and internationally) and our expertise spans all vehicle and licence categories.

Q2

Are the personnel provided to carry out either training or testing activity suitably qualified and regulated?

Surprisingly some large post-test training bodies and road safety charities, even those providing DVSA accredited tests, are reliant on non-professionally qualified, unlicensed and unregulated personnel to deliver their driver training services. As the largest and most respected professional association for driver trainers, working to improve the quality of driver training and testing, we believe only suitably qualified and regulated trainers and examiners should be used in every driver training and testing intervention.

It is important to check that the provider you are considering will have access to fully regulated and qualified professional personnel at all times.

Diamond is the only accredited advanced driver and rider training body in the UK to use only those trainers and examiners who hold the appropriate qualifications and licencing to carry out driver training activity in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1988¹.

For more information and advice on choosing a professional driver trainer provider for any aspect of your authority's road safety provision please do not hesitate to contact us via our website at:

www.advancedmotoring.co.uk



SHOP

- Diamond Tests
- Taxi tests
- Books
- Educational aids
- Car accessories

Diamond are a nominated DVSA accredited provider for private hire taxi testing.

Diamond is the leading provider of government accredited training and assessments for drivers and riders and part of the largest professional driver training association in the UK. As such we already work with a number of local authorities to provide fully accredited occupational driver training and testing services specifically for the taxi and private hire market. We provide:

Once you have purchased an appropriate Taxi Test below, your details will be forwarded to your nominated examiner who will typically be in touch within the next 72 hours (Monday-Friday) with a view to booking your test within the next 5-10 working days.

Your examiner will arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place local to you to conduct your test. We do not have specific locations and your examiner will discuss meeting places and any other queries with you once your booking has been made. Please confirm your booking reference with your examiner. You will need a car suitable for test purposes (we do not supply cars) which has current and valid insurance, MOT, road tax and is roadworthy in terms of lights, tyres etc.

Upon successful completion of your Diamond test you will be issued with a certificate together with a copy of your test report.



Enhanced Taxi Test
£90.00



Standard Taxi Test
£78.00

Local Authorities

looking for a reputable assessment provider and alternative to the DVSA? [Read our useful guide](#) to choosing a provider and test'

[Download](#)

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SHINES THROUGH

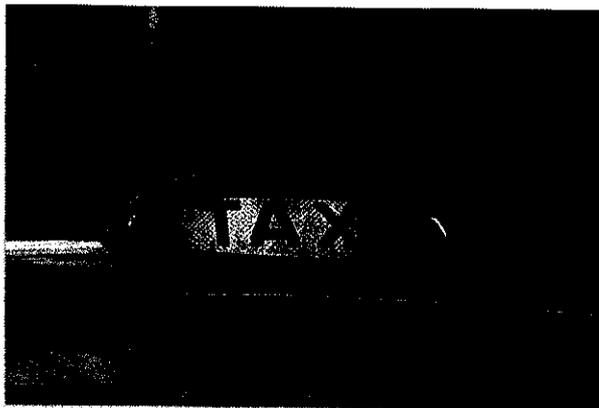
[Contact us](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)





SHOP



Enhanced Taxi Test

SKU: EnhancedTaxiTest

£90.00

Quantity

ADD TO CART

Terms and Conditions

I declare that I have read and understood the requirements of the test that I am applying for.

Refund policy: for cancellations received up to 7 days prior to the test date we will refund 50% of the fee paid, no other refunds will be made after this time.

Your details will be forwarded to your nominated examiner who will be in touch with you within the next 48 hours (Monday-Friday) with a view to booking your test within the next 5-10 working days. Your examiner will arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place to conduct your test.

Diamond will not supply a car for your test. It is your responsibility to ensure your vehicle is legal, roadworthy, taxed and insured for test purposes with sufficient fuel for the duration. You will be asked to read a number plate at the required distance, full details can be found at www.gov.uk/driving-eyesight-rules. Your test will be cancelled if you cannot reach this requirement. You will need a current and valid driving licence which will be checked by your examiner prior to the test.

The Diamond enhanced taxi test lasts approximately 75 minutes and includes the wheelchair exercise. The test covers a variety of roads and where possible motorways, rural roads and an emergency stop exercise. You will be expected to do at least 2 manoeuvres involving reversing and demonstrate eco-safe driving. A pass will be awarded if you achieve no serious or dangerous faults and you do not exceed 6 driver faults. You may also be asked to answer several highway code questions at the beginning or end of your test, depending on your local authority requirements.

For the enhanced test you will need to bring a wheelchair accessible vehicle. You will need to show your ability to safely load and unload the wheelchair in your vehicle, use the wheelchair brakes to secure and release the chair, fasten the seat belts or safety harness and secure any wheel belts or clamps fitted to your vehicle.

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Contact us

Terms and Conditions

