

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENSING - CARRYING OF GUIDE, HEARING AND OTHER ASSISTANCE DOGS
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 4 February 2004	Ref: WBK/KH	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To advise the Committee of proposed Private Hire Car Driver's Licences (Carriage of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Taxi Drivers' Licences (Carrying of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 came into force on 2 December 2002. Those regulations are designed to require licensed taxi drivers to carry guide, hearing and other assistance dogs accompanying disabled people, and to do so at no extra charge. The regulations impose a mandatory condition to carry such dogs on all taxi driver's licences for which application was made on or after 3 March 2003. Accordingly, there will be full implementation by 2006, given the three year licensing cycle. Drivers can obtain an exemption from the condition on medical grounds accompanied by appropriate medical evidence.
- 2.2. The taxi drivers' regulations were previously reported to Committee and are working well. There have been no applications for exemption to date.
- 2.3. The Scottish Executive has now proposed identical regulations in respect of private hire car drivers. As yet no timescale for implementation is proposed but it may be reasonably anticipated that the regulations will come into force some time in 2004.
- 2.4. When the Taxi Driver's Licences (Carrying of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations 2003 were brought into force, the Council used its discretionary licensing powers to impose identical requirements on private hire car drivers and is therefore one step ahead of the national position. The discretionary licensing position should move seamlessly to the national position when the national regulations come into force. The Scottish Executive has been reminded of the Council's position and of its support for these measures in respect of both taxi and private hire car drivers.

3. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The matters under consideration in this report reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to ensuring the services within the direct responsibility or regulation of the Council are "disabled friendly".

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1. The Committee is asked to note the proposed Private Hire Car Driver's Licences (Carriage of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs) (Scotland) Regulations meantime.

Walter B. Kilgour

P. **Director of Administration**

Members seeking further information on the contents of this Report are asked to contact Kenny Hannaway, Senior Solicitor (Licensing) on Ext. 2214.