

# DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE	26 OCTOBER 2016	7
DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE			

## PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

## SUMMARY

A request has been received from an existing operator in the Borough that Fylde Council consider the introduction of on-line disclosure checks to speed up the driver application process.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee notes the report and considers authorising Officers to investigate the possibility of outsourcing disclosure checks.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The current Policy regarding disclosures was approved by the Licensing and Appeals Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services ( <b>Value for Money</b> )	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council ( <b>Clean and Green</b> )	
Working with all partners ( <b>Vibrant Economy</b> )	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live ( <b>A Great Place to Live</b> )	
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit ( <b>A Great Place to Visit</b> )	

## REPORT

1. When considering applications for hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences, a council should not grant a licence unless they are satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person. An element of ascertaining the fitness and propriety is achieved by checking whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions or other concerns through a background check submitted to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) previously the Criminal Records Bureau.
2. Fylde Council's Licensing Team currently require all drivers to submit applications for an enhanced Disclosure through the DBS each 3 years. Should an applicant have been granted a licence and have an unspent conviction, disclosures are required annually until the conviction becomes spent.
3. The cost of a Disclosure Certificate, set by the DBS, is £44 and applications require a significant amount of verification evidence to be produced such as sight of passport, driving licence, National Insurance number, proof of address etc. Fylde Council, do not make any additional charge for administration of this service. During 2015, 135 disclosure applications were submitted and in 2016 this figure is currently 143.
4. The DBS have recently introduced an update service where a person in receipt of a Disclosure Certificate may subscribe to the update service within 19 days of receiving it at a cost of £13 p/a. The holder may then present the certificate to a registered body who can immediately check whether there is any new information on records since the certificate was printed.
5. The DBS now only issue one copy of a Certificate which is sent directly to the applicant and as such, the Licensing Team contact applicants when Certificates have been issued requesting sight of them. The time take for a Certificate to be issued can vary from 2 weeks to 6 months. If an applicant has moved around and lived in different Police force areas the check will invariably take longer and it is known that there are issues with the turn round times for the police element of the check to be conducted by the Metropolitan Police and in Dorset.
6. A licensed operator in the Borough has requested that consideration is given to revising the way in which DBS checks are conducted and on line service is introduced. The operator is concerned about the time it can take a Certificate to be returned and he is losing potential drivers to occupations where DBS Certificates are not required such as couriers.
7. Offices have met with "Personnel Checks" who provide an on-line checking service, which as it removes the postage element is quicker and more efficient. Further information as to the how system can be operated will be provided at the meeting but the system does come at an additional cost to the driver. DBS applications cost £69 and are made directly to "Personnel Checks, with the applicant applying on line with no involvement from ourselves.
8. There is still a requirement for the verification of identity which can be achieved through Crown Post Offices. The nearest Crown Post Office is located in St Annes and the Licensing Team may still have to allocate time to provide a checking service. Alternatively, it is understood there is provision for operators to be authorised to act as a checking agent. The Post Office charge £8.75 for verification.
9. There are other companies who provide on line DBS Checks and before making further enquiries Officers are seeking the views of the Committee and whether it is felt the outsourcing of DBS Checks to an online service through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party is a consideration that should be progressed or whether the Committee consider that the existing process is suitable and sufficient.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no implications arising directly from the report as the Authority does not make any profit from DBS Checks
Legal	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Community Safety	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications arising directly from the report.

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing	2006	<a href="http://www.fylde.gov.uk/business/licensing/taxilicensing/">http://www.fylde.gov.uk/business/licensing/taxilicensing/</a>

Attached documents

1. Request to consider on line DBS checks