



**Rochford District
Council**

REPORT TITLE:	Discussion surrounding the allocation of new Licensed Driver allocated slots under the Earn as You Learn Scheme (Operator Support Scheme)
REPORT OF:	Tracey Lilley

REPORT SUMMARY

To consider amending the existing restriction on the 4 main taxi operators associated with the Earn As You Learn Scheme (also known as the Operator Support Scheme).

On 9th March 2023, the Licensing and Appeals Committee reviewed the effectiveness of the Earn As You Learn scheme to try and encourage new drivers into the trade.

There was a debate around the issue of number of 'EAYL' badges issued to operators within the District with some Members considering it appropriate to put in place an overall figure of the number of badges, of 40 badges, shared out amongst the 'EAYL' drivers rather than limiting the number available to taxi operators. Other Members, however, believed that the same number of 'EAYL' badges should be given to each taxi operator, in the interests of fairness.

Cllr A G Cross moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr C M Stanley, that rather than restrict each operator to 10 EAYL badges at any one time, there should be an overall cap of 40, to be determined on a first come first served basis. This was lost on a show of hands.

(2 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 7 voted against and 1 abstained.)

Cllr A L Williams moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, that each of the 4 main operators are allocated 10 'Earn as You Learn' spaces under an Operator Development Scheme. Once a driver has passed their Knowledge Test or completed the 9-month period, the slot is made available to the operator to hire another applicant. This was carried on a show of hands.

(7 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 3 against and 0 abstained.)

The revised criteria has been in place over the last 6 months, two of the operators, (Bestax and Andrews) have used their allocation of applicants, whereby the other two operators have not used the scheme.

The proposed recommendation is to amend the restriction of ten (10) allocated slots to fifteen (15) allocated slots for the two main operators and the remaining ten (10) slots will be shared by the other two operators (on a first come first served basis) that have not been proactive in the use of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1 -** To amend the restriction on Bestax and Andrews allocation of new applicants from ten (10) to fifteen (15) and share the remaining ten slots between the other two (2) operators associated with the scheme on a first come first served basis.
- R2 -** To conduct a full review the scheme again at the next Licensing and Appeals Committee

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Since the amendment to the scheme, the two main operators covering the Rochford District have taken full advantage of the scheme and the popularity has meant that they have been forced to turn away new applicants.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1. On 18th January 2022 the Licensing Team presented a proposal to introduce an Earn as You Learn licensed driver scheme.
- 2.2. At the time, there was a national licensed driver shortage following the pandemic whereby a number of drivers found alternative employment or decided to not continue in the trade.
- 2.3. Following a meeting with the four (4) main operators it was identified that the requirements at the time to obtain a Hackney Carriage drivers licence took approximately 6 months before the driver could start to work.
- 2.4. For those that were seeking employment in the trade, they have to take this timeline into consideration with the knowledge they may not work for up to 6 months whilst they complete the application process.

2.5. This was supported by all members at the meeting

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 No other alternatives have been identified.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 The risks associated with this amendment are low. Over the previous 12 months there was no restrictions on the number of new applicants, by maintaining the 40 limit, this still provides the opportunity for new applicants to join the scheme whilst maintaining levels of drivers to provide sufficient work for existing drivers.

5.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

5.1 This request has been made by the two main operators that have been actively using the scheme to introduce new drivers.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This amendment will not impact on any Rochford District Council Financial position.

7.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No legal implications other than those already identified within this report

8.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No Equality or Health implications identified.

9.0 ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 No Environment or Climate implications identified.

10.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This will allow the trade to maintain a level of service to the public and supporting the economy associated with the trade.

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Licensing and Appeals Committee  Item 7 Report: Proposal to introduce an "earn as you learn" private hire driver's badge - Licensing & Appeals Committee - 18/01/2022 (134Kb)  Minutes: Licensing & Appeals Committee - 18/01/2022 (127Kb)	18/01/2022
Licensing and Appeals Committee  Item 6 Report: 'Earn As You Learn' Scheme Review - Licensing & Appeals Committee - 09/03/2023 (544Kb)  Minutes: Licensing & Appeals Committee - 09/03/2023 (121Kb)	09/03/2023