

Member Report

Review of hackney carriage and private hire policy



Report to: Regulatory Committee
Report from: Stephen Brown
Portfolio: Growth Enterprise and Environment
Report date: 23 January 2025
Decision type: Committee

1.0 Summary of report

- 1.1 The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy sets out the policy that the authority will apply when making decisions about hackney carriage and private hire applications and licences that are currently in force.
- 1.2 The Licensing team is committed to reviewing the policy at least every 5 years but interim reviews will be considered should there be significant issues that require inclusion. The catalyst for this review was to ensure that the policy has been reviewed considering the Department for Transport's (DfT) Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities, which has recently been updated.
- 1.3 This report seeks approval of the revised draft policy which is included at Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The report recommends that the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be approved for implementation by the licensing team.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The DfT's best practice guidance puts forward several recommendations but states that, "Individual licensing authorities are still responsible for deciding their own policies and making decisions on individual licensing matters applying the relevant law and any other relevant considerations. This guidance is primarily intended to assist licensing authorities, but it is only guidance and does not intend to give a definitive statement of the law".
- 3.2 The draft policy is included at Appendix 1 and an overview of all the proposed changes and consideration of the best practice is included at Appendix 2. The proposals that have the most impact on the trade are detailed as follows.

- 3.3 Currently, all vehicles that are specified on applications relating to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are subject to an age requirement. New vehicles must be under 6 years old when first licensed. Existing licensed vehicles must be under 12 years old on renewal. It is proposed that this age requirement be removed from the policy and replaced with the requirement that all vehicles must meet the Euro 6 emissions standard. The Euro 6 standard, if approved, would only apply to new vehicles licensed after the publication of the revised policy.
- 3.4 Currently, all vehicles must be mechanically inspected at least twice a year, regardless of age. It is proposed that this requirement be reduced to once a year for vehicles under 6 years of age and remain twice a year for vehicles over 6 years of age.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 A consultation exercise was conducted in November 2024 where hackney carriage and private hire licence holders and various other stakeholders were invited to view and make comments on the draft policy.
- 4.2 Several licensed drivers have expressed positivity toward the changes and have asked when they will be implemented.
- 4.3 There was a response to the consultation from the Council's Assistant Director for Environment Sustainability and Culture. The request was to add the requirement that all vehicles have start/stop technology where they have an internal combustion engine to prevent idling. However, this is not a recommendation in the best practice guidance. The proposal to implement a Euro 6 standard is common practice among licensing authorities in their efforts to tackle environmental pollution.

5.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
- Appendix 2 – Proposed changes and consideration of best practice

6.0 Contact officer

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