



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

General Licensing Committee Agenda

9.30 am

Tuesday, 6 September 2022

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on 19 July 2022 (Pages 3 - 4)
4. To approve the Minutes of the meetings of the General Licensing Sub Committee held on 19 July 2022 (Pages 5 - 6)
5. Application for Renewal of Licence for premises to be approved as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships - Blackwell Grange Hotel –
Report of the Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District
(Pages 7 - 10)
6. Interim Review of Policies and Conditions relating to Hackney Carriages, Private Hire Vehicles and their Drivers and Operators following consultation –
Report of the Group Director of Services
(Pages 11 - 26)
7. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
8. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Friday, 26 August 2022

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Clarke, Crumbie, Donoghue, Haszeldine, C L B Hughes, B Jones, Lee, Newall, K Nicholson, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott and Snedker

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GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 July 2022

PRESENT – Councillors C L B Hughes (Chair), Clarke, Crumbie, Donoghue, B Jones, Lee, Newall, K Nicholson, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott and Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillors Haszeldine and Renton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Colin Dobson (Licensing Manager), Amy Wennington (Principal Lawyer (Litigation)), Allison Hill (Democratic Officer), Amy Wennington (Principal Lawyer (Litigation)), Colin Dobson (Licensing Manager), Pc Iain Robertson (Durham Constabulary), Thomas Mann (Licensing Support Officer) and PC Newcombe (Durham Constabulary)

LG9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

LG10 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 JUNE 2022

Submitted – the Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on 7 June 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing committee held on 7 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

LG11 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 JUNE 2022

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the General Licensing Sub-Committee held on 7 June 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing Sub-Committee held on 7 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

LG12 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - REDWORTH HALL HOTEL, REDWORTH

The Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the renewal of a licence for the Redworth Hall Hotel to be approved as a venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships in accordance with the provisions of The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994); the Civil Partnership Act (2004); the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

The submitted report gave a summary of the Redworth Hall Hotel as approved venues; the designated rooms and maximum capacity for each room for civil marriage and civil partnerships.

Councillor Lee referred to historic concerns raised by residents in Redworth Village regarding noise and inappropriate language generated from those events in the hotel's Great Hall and requested that this Licensing Committee be advised on what steps the hotel are taking at events to mitigate the potential for noise disruption.

RESOLVED – That the licence for the Redworth Hall Hotel as an approved premise for civil marriage and civil partnerships be granted for a further three years from 31 July 2022 and that the places designated where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place indoors at the premises and the maximum of numbers of persons who can attend those marriage and civil partnerships continue to be:

The Great Hall - 150

Kelvington Suite - 100

Prince Bishop Suite - 280

The Minstrels Gallery – 2-

The Restaurant - 100

The 1744 Room - 80

Cocktail Bar - 50

The Summerhouse (outside structure) * - 6

*ie. two registrars, the couple and two witnesses inside the gazebo. Guests Outside on the garden is unlimited.

LG13 QUESTIONS

A Member asked a question regarding the current position on the introduction of an automated system for Taxi Licensing applications and payment.

GENERAL LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 July 2022

PRESENT – Councillors Donoghue, C L B Hughes, Lee, Mrs H Scott and Snedker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Amy Wennington (Principal Lawyer (Litigation)), Colin Dobson (Licensing Manager), Allison Hill (Democratic Officer), PC Iain Robertson (Durham Constabulary), PC Newcombe (Durham Constabulary) and Thomas Mann (Licensing Support Officer)

LGS5 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

RESOLVED - That Councillor C Hughes be elected Chair for the purpose of this meeting.

LGS6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

LGS7 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That, pursuant to Sections 100A (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the ensuing item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

LGS8 PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE APPLICATION FOR GRANT (EXCLUSION PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 7)

Ref. 05/22 - The Group Director of Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to a new application for a grant of a Private Hire Driver Licence in light of previous convictions including motoring convictions.

The driver attended the meeting and responded to Members questions in relation to the above, and to why they felt that they were a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Driver Licence.

In reaching their decision, Members took into consideration the Council's Licensing Policy, which sets out the Council's stance on the Relevance of Convictions, Cautions and Endorseable Fixed Penalties in assessing whether an applicant is a fit and proper person; the Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy and Procedures; and Section 51(1)(a) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

After careful consideration Members decided to depart from the Council's Licensing Policy that there will be an expectation that applicants have been free from any conviction for violence for at least ten years as the applicant had demonstrated to Members that he was fit and proper person and they were satisfied that they were remorseful, and that they had changed their behaviour and that this had been a stand-alone incident.

However, due to the violence conviction and two speeding incidents, Members agreed that the driver be issued with a warning about their conduct.

RESOLVED – That the application be granted with a warning letter in respect of future conduct and the applicant be warned that if any further convictions, cautions, warnings or reprimands are received they would be referred immediately to the General Licensing Sub Committee.

**GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE FOR
MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

Blackwell Grange Hotel, Grange Road, Darlington DL3 8QH

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the renewal of a licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel to be able to continue as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnerships in accordance with the provisions of:
 - (a) The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994);
 - (b) The Civil Partnership Act (2004);
 - (c) The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and
 - (d) The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

Summary

2. Since 1994 local authorities have been able to approve venues where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place as alternative venue to a Register Office with most approved venues being hotels.
3. Blackwell Grange Hotel has been licensed by the local authority since 1994 as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships. Blackwell Grange Hotel is also currently one of the more popular venues in Darlington for marriages and civil partnerships. It has important role to play in the local economy in terms of employment and also of attracting wedding couples and their guests to Darlington from a wide area with most couples being married at the Blackwell Grange Hotel being located outside of Darlington.

The current licence for Blackwell Grange Hotel is due to expire on 22nd November 2022. The hotel has indicated that they have future bookings for weddings and wish to continue as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnerships.

4. There have been no issues with Blackwell Grange Hotel which would adversely affect their application to renew its licence. Renewal of the licence would provide the hotel with a licence for civil marriage and civil partnerships for a further three years from 22nd November 2022.

Information

5. Blackwell Grange Hotel has the required fire risk assessments and there are no accessibility or DDA issues which would adversely affect either application.
6. The premises are considered to be suitable for approval as a venue for marriage and civil partnerships, subject to the standard conditions and a limit on the number of people permitted to be present in the nominated rooms. The venue does not wish to change the capacities or designated areas where civil marriages or civil partnership can take place.

The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 were amended in March 2022 to permit outdoor marriage and civil partnerships at a suitable location anywhere within the boundary of the licensed premise.

7. The current locations and capacities for civil marriage and civil partnerships at the Blackwell Grange Hotel are:

Room	Maximum Capacity
The George Allan Suite	130
The Bruhenny Suite	300
The Havelock Restaurant	150
The Gazebo *	6

*ie. two registrars, the couple and two witnesses inside the gazebo.
Guests Outside on the garden is unlimited.

Financial Implications

8. Blackwell Grange Hotel has been invoiced for £1750.00 being the fee for all venues seeking a grant or renewal of a licence for civil marriage or civil partnerships.

Legal Implications

9. The current licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel expires on 22nd November 2022. The grant of a further licence is required to facilitate its current bookings for civil marriages and partnerships. The standard renewal licence is for three years from the date of expiry of the current licence. The licensing committee can issue a licence on a shorter timescale as a temporary measure should it wish and/or make specific conditions including where the ceremony can take place, how many can attend and improvements for accessibility.

Conclusion

10. Members are asked to renew the licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel for a further three years from 22nd November 2022.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel as an approved premise for civil marriage and civil partnerships be granted for a further three years from 22nd November 2022 and that the places designated where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place indoors at the premises and the maximum of numbers of persons who can attend those marriage and civil partnerships continue to be:

Room	Maximum Capacity
The George Allan Suite	130
The Bruhenny Suite	300
The Havelock Restaurant	150
The Gazebo *	6

*ie. two registrars, the couple and two witnesses inside the gazebo.
Guests Outside on the garden is unlimited.

Reasons

12. To facilitate the continuation of the Blackwell Grange Hotel as a premise approved for civil marriages and civil partnerships.

**Luke Swinhoe, Assistant Director, Law and Governance and
Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District**

Anthony Hall, Superintendent Registrar, Ext 6400

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GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

6 September 2022

INTERIM REVIEW OF POLICIES AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGES, PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES AND THEIR DRIVERS AND OPERATORS FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider amendments to Darlington Borough Council's 'Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy 2021' following public consultation, which was authorised on 6 June 2022.

Information

2. On 26 November 2020, Full Council approved a new Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy, which was implemented on 1 January 2021. This policy was developed by following due process and included for the first time, statutory standards, issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. A non-statutory best practice guide produced in 2006 and updated periodically complements the statutory standards.
3. It has been recognised that since 2006 there have been many issues that have impacted on the trade and a revised best practice guide to reflect these has recently been consulted upon.
4. Democratic processes mean that it is unlikely this guidance will be formally implemented until 2023, however the problems facing the trade at the moment are acute, and early intervention in relation to some matters may help alleviate those problems without compromising public safety. The DfT recommends policies should be reviewed every five years but that interim reviews should also be considered where significant issues arise.
5. On the 28 April 2022 a liaison meeting took place with representatives of the trade and Licensing where proposals were raised that would help the trade maintain their business through these difficult times.
6. These proposed changes relate to:
 - Vehicle age restrictions
 - Topographical knowledge test
 - Window tint
7. A table of those proposed changes along with a rationale is at **Appendix 1**. Extracts of our current policy is at **Appendix 2** and relevant sections of the Best Practice Guidance document that was consulted upon are produced at **Appendix 3**.

8. On the 6 June 2022 the Licensing Committee granted approval for these changes to be published for public consultation. Cognizance was taken to Members concerns that Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle's (WAV) would be exempt from the Euro 6 requirements and that over time this could lead to increased emissions. It was explained that the number of WAV's is low at the moment and this issue would be subject further consideration at the next full review scheduled for 2024-2025.
9. Consultation was advertised through local media and took place between 13 June and 17 July 2022. It was available to view on Darlington Borough Council's website consultations page with links to relevant documentation (**Appendix 4**). In addition, a list of consultees were contacted directly by Licensing, asking for comment (**Appendix 5**).
10. At the end of the consultation period representations were made; two from members of the public; one from Environmental Health; and one from Darlington Association on Disability (DAD). These have been reproduced in full at **Appendix 6**.
11. In summary, whilst one respondent from the public was in support of removing the locality test, the other felt that by removing this test, it would lead to the removal of the driving test. The draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Best Practice Guidance does not advocate removing the driving test and indeed emphasises the importance of maintaining professional driving standards.
12. The representative from DAD asked that a condition be made for private hire drivers to have a satnav. It should be noted that Personal Digital Assistants used by private hire drivers to take jobs from operators already use satnav technology.
13. Whilst Environmental Health would like to see all the taxi fleet meet the Euro 6 standards by 1st April 2023, they understand that these are exceptional times and they are happy for this to be discussed at the next scheduled review. Comments were made about the need for a vehicle to not just be compliant with Euro 6 but also to be presentable. DBC currently have a bi-annual inspection regime with strict standards, which include presentation.
14. Comment was made by DAD regarding concerns that vulnerable people inside the vehicle will not be seen from outside. This is addressed in the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Best Practice Guidance in that where there is supporting evidence, CCTV should be used. Darlington have no evidence to support the requirement for CCTV, however this is an emerging national discussion issue that can be debated in more detail during the next review.
15. Stakeholders felt that these proposals will give a significant boost to the trade in the short term, whereupon these elements of the new draft DfT guidance can be incorporated immediately. Further consultation on these amendments can take place as part of the next scheduled policy review and this will also provide an opportunity to assess their effectiveness.

Recommendation

Members to approve the proposal for amendments to the policy for a final decision to be taken by Full Council

Dave Winstanley
Services Group

Background Papers

1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

2 Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy 2021

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/12723/dbc-private-hire-hackney-carriage-licensing-policy-2021.pdf>

3 Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Best Practice Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063053/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-consulting-on-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-England.pdf

Appendices

- 1 Table of all alternative proposals
- 2 Extracts from current private hire and hackney carriage policy
- 3 Extracts from best practice guidance
- 4 Website consultation page
- 5 List of consultees
- 6 Responses from consultation

Appendix 1

Table of proposed changes to current policy

Subject	Proposed change	Rationale
Page 26 – Age Restrictions	No age restriction of vehicles provided engines are compliant with Euro 6 standards by April 1 st 2023 (with the exception of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles already licensed)	<p>Emissions is a key factor for vehicle age. All vehicles manufactured after September 2015 will be Euro 6 standards and this will remove older, more polluting vehicles. Safety standards will be maintained through our current vehicle testing regime.</p> <p>Emission free and hybrid vehicles are already less polluting.</p> <p>This has been proposed in the DfT consultation</p> <p>Number of WAV’s not compliant with Euro 6 by April 2023 is very low and removing them will be a disproportionate response when there is a need for more of them</p>
Page 13 - Topographical knowledge test for all drivers prior to licensing	Locality test for a Private Hire Drivers Licence to be removed.	Unlike hackney carriages that can be hired immediately, private hire vehicles take pre-booked journeys only, with routes that can be planned.

		<p>With improved technology routes are often sent directly to a vehicles satnav so that in-depth knowledge is not required for private hire drivers.</p> <p>This test can be off-putting to prospective drivers, however they are still required to pass the remaining modules, so safety will not be compromised</p> <p>Will assist with recruiting new drivers</p>
<p>Page 32 - Window tint - all rear windows have a minimum of 30% light transmission</p>	<p>No tint restriction provided that the tint is standard to the vehicle from the production line</p>	<p>Front windscreen and front passenger windows already have a minimum tint requirement by regulations.</p> <p>Rear windows often have a lower light transmission and can vary from each car production.</p> <p>DfT consultation says that if there are possible safety issues, where these are evidenced, an alternative such as CCTV should be considered.</p> <p>This can be a considerable cost saving to the trade who will not be required to change glass from a standard production line vehicle for it to be licensed.</p>

Appendix 2

Current Policy

Page 26

Age Restrictions

183. The Council has age restriction policies in place requiring the vehicle to be under 4 years of age when first presented for licensing. Vehicle licences will only be renewed up to 8 years old (except for purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles such as London Cabs which may be licensed up to 10 years of age).

184. From the 1st April 2023, all licensed vehicles must be aged eight years or under.

186. The initial age of the vehicle will be extended from under 4 years to less than 6 years in respect of purpose-built vehicles only i.e. London cabs and similar vehicles to encourage more purpose-built wheelchair accessible vehicles in the fleet.

Page 13

Driver Knowledge/Locality Test

85. In order to determine the fitness of a person to hold a licence, all applicants are required to sit and pass a test on their knowledge of the local geography, driver conduct / conditions, Highway Code, licensing legislation and awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation/Safeguarding. Tests for hackney carriage drivers include a more detailed assessment of local geography, location of hackney carriage stands and knowledge of tariffs and charges. A driver licence will not be issued without the applicant first passing the knowledge test.

Page 32

Tinted Windows

232. The Council's specification relating to the use of tinted windows in licensed vehicles is as follows:

- (a) The windscreen shall have a minimum light transmission of 75%
- (b) All other front windows of any vehicle shall have a minimum of 70% light transmission.
- (c) All rear windows shall have a minimum of 30% light transmission, unless the below criterion can be met where there will be no minimum light transmission.

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Best Practice Guidelines Consultation

Page 38

Vehicle age limits

8.28 The frequency of testing required (see ‘frequency of vehicle tests’ above) to ensure the ongoing safety of vehicles is a separate issue to the setting of maximum age limits at first licensing, or maximum age limits beyond which an authority will not licence a vehicle. The setting of an arbitrary age limit may be inappropriate and counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers. For example, a maximum age for first licensing may have adverse unintended consequences; a five-year-old used electric vehicle will produce less emissions than a new Euro 6 diesel or petrol fuel car – enabling the trade to make use of previously owned vehicles will assist it to transition more rapidly to zero emission vehicles and improve air quality.

8.29 Licensing authorities should not impose age limits for the licensing of vehicles but should consider more targeted requirements to meet its policy objectives on emissions, safety rating and increasing wheelchair accessible provision where this is low

Page 16

Accessibility barriers

4.8 Licensing Authorities should also:

- Incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible vehicles where mandating them would be inappropriate.
- Exercise discretion on application of other vehicle requirements if they would prevent suitable wheelchair accessible vehicles from being brought into service where there is unmet demand.

Page 29

Topographical knowledge

6.23 Taxi drivers need a good working knowledge of the area for which they are licensed because taxis can be hired immediately, directly with the driver, at ranks or on the street and so drivers are not able to prepare a route. Licensing authorities should therefore require prospective taxi drivers to pass a test of local topographical knowledge as a pre-requisite to the first grant of a licence. The Department’s view is that the stringency of the

test should reflect the complexity or otherwise of the local geography, in accordance with the principle of ensuring that barriers to entry are not unnecessarily high.

6.24 Private hire vehicles are not legally available for immediate hiring. To hire a private hire vehicle the prospective passenger must go through an operator, so the driver will have an opportunity to check the details of a route before starting a journey and plan or enter it in a navigation system. Licensing authorities may set private hire vehicle drivers a topographical test, but are not required to do so

Page 36

Tinted windows

8.14 The rules for tinted vehicle windows are available on gov.uk. For most cars on the road today, the minimum light transmission for windscreens is 75% and 70% for front side windows. Vehicles may be manufactured with glass that is darker than this fitted to windows rearward of the driver, especially in luxury, estate and people carrier style vehicles.

8.15 If the objective of the authority's prohibition of tinted windows is to address a concern that illegal activity is taking place in a vehicle, the evidence for this should be established and alternative options should be considered, for example, CCTV in vehicles. When licensing vehicles, authorities should be mindful of this as well as the significant costs and inconvenience associated with changing glass that conforms with the requirements of vehicle construction regulations.

8.16 In the absence of evidence to show that a requirement for the removal of factory fitted windows is necessary and proportionate, licensing authorities should not require their removal as part of vehicle specifications. However, authorities should carefully consider the views of the public and the trade when considering the acceptance of 'after-market' tinting.

Private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy review

Since the Covid pandemic the UK has had a shortage of taxi and private hire drivers.

The trade has also experienced increasing vehicle maintenance and replacement costs.

The Department for Transport are currently consulting on a revised best practice guide.

We are taking the opportunity to carry out an interim review of our private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy.

We have considered proposals in the draft best practice guide, alongside our current policy.

The trade feels they could adopt the following changes before a full review of the policy is carried out in 2024.

This will provide a much-needed boost and maintain a service that is so important to the public.

The proposed changes

Vehicle age

No age restriction of vehicles.

Provided engines are compliant with Euro 6 standards by April 1st 2023 except for wheelchair accessible vehicles already licensed.

This will be subject to further discussion at the time of the next full review.

Tints

No tint restriction.

Provided the tint is standard to the vehicle from the production line.

Locality test

Removal of the locality test for a private hire driver's license.

Your views

We would like your views of the proposed changes to our policy.

Please provide a written response to licensing@darlington.gov.uk.

Further information

- [Current Private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy](#) [pdf document]
- [GOV.UK - Taxi and private hire vehicle best practice guidance](#) [external link]

Appendix

List of Consultees

HC and PH trade

PH Operators

Durham Constabulary

British Transport Police

Home Office Immigration Enforcement

Durham and Darlington Fire Authority

Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)

Highways

Environmental Health

Trading Standards

Planning

Public Health

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Parish Councils

Schools Home to School Transport Section

Local transport providers

Tees Valley Local Authorities

North East Strategic Licensing Group (NESLG)

DBC Councillors

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Appendix 6

Consultation Responses

Environmental Health

Whilst it would be good to retain a vehicle age restriction the requirement for taxis to meet Euro 6 standards by April 1st 2023 will be the most effective measure in achieving reductions in vehicle emissions from the taxi fleet and have the greatest impact in improving air quality. Whilst in terms of air quality Environmental Health would prefer the vehicle age restriction to remain in place we acknowledge that other factors require consideration and are pleased to see that if a decision is made to remove the age restriction that this will be further considered at the next Taxi Licensing Policy review in 2024.

Thanks

Carol Whelan

Environmental Health Manager (Environmental Protection)

DAD

Interim Taxi Policy review consultation

- No age restriction of vehicles, provided engines are compliant with Euro 6 standards by April 1st 2023 (with the exception of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles already licensed. This will be subject to further discussion at the time of the next full review).

A vehicle needs to be presentable not just compliant with Euro 6 standards.

- No tint restriction, provided that the tint is standard to the vehicle from the production line.

I have concerns for the safety of some vulnerable people being inside a vehicle where they can't be seen from outside.

- Locality test for a Private Hire Drivers Licence to be removed.

If this was to be allowed it must come with a condition that drivers must have a satnav. Many disabled people cannot give instructions on how to get to where they need to go. Most people with sight loss will not be able to guide the driver. This will be the same for some disabled people with a learning impairment or lack communication skills.

Darlington Association on Disability.

Public response 1

Hello licencing,

I am righting this email to share my views on purposed changes if I may ;

I don't know the reasoning for the vehicle euro 6 part I would expect the shortage of cars to play apart in that factor but I believe there should be some sort of minimum term just for the fact the cars do a lot of miles and as much as the up keep is good and standards hight, The reliability is some what compromised after a certain point and the interiors become tatty and represent the trade in a bad light.

Furthermore the locality test my viewpoint on that is why only limit it to private hire if you where going to implement that why not do that for Hackney vehicles as well, Both I would not like to see to be honest as I find this part of the test just as much as anything else to be a necessity as that is the job after all .The test is meant to be exactly that a test I believe dropping that would not be beneficial to the trade and in the end up with a load of disgruntled end users. I truly believe The council and the processes the council put applicants through are fair and just and give reasonable standard to be met that a applicant will be some what capable at the job and truly the problem of the industry is country wide and falls on the pay structure and opportunity's private hire gives there drivers.

I believe that if you remove the locality you will get some people who best serves them lobbying to remove the Dsa test as well in hindsight they are both Job specific and reflect on the minimum floor of the job to be met.

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your time and wishing you a good day.

Yours

Public response 2

I most say there is definitely need for a more private hire drivers because comes to school hours you've got no chance to get a taxi to save your life!

Or weekends all day all night also like myself I've lost my business during pandemic and very seriously considered to be come a taxi driver or private hire driver but the knowledge test made it impossible now I'm still on universal credit and I really do hope they will scrap the knowledge test and let people get jobs I believe it will be great help to many people and boost to local economy