

GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

7 June 2022

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider changes to Darlington Borough Council's 'Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy 2021' following the impact Covid-19 and rapidly increasing running costs has had on the taxi trade.

Information

2. On 26 November 2020, Full Council approved a new Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy, which was implemented on 1st 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 is currently open for public consultation.
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 28th 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. In summary 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 Consultation document are produced at **Appendix 3**.
8. Stakeholders felt that these proposals will give a significant boost to the trade in the short term, whereupon the new guidance can be incorporated in full following consultation when the next scheduled policy review is due to take place in 2025.

Consultation Requirement

9. If Members are minded to approve any proposal to amend the policy, that decision will be subject to a full consultation.

Recommendation

Members to approve the proposal for amendments to the policy be subject of a public consultation.

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

