

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Yvonne O'Donnell
Environmental Health Manager

TO: Licensing Committee

24 July 2017

WARDS: All

**REVIEW OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING
POLICY**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cambridge City Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney carriage, Private Hire and Dual Drivers, proprietors and operators within the City. The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (the 'policy') applies to all drivers, vehicles and operators (Appendix A).
- 1.2 The policy is intended to ensure that both the trade and the public have a document that fully explains the licensing procedures to all parties in a clear and transparent manner.
- 1.3 The Council shall seek to promote the following objectives that impact on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades:
 - i) The protection of the public;
 - ii) The establishment of professional and respected hackney carriage and private hire trades;
 - iii) Access to an efficient and effective public transport service; and
 - iv) The protection of the environment
- 1.4 The policy provides the Council, and Council Officers, who are required to administer the licensing function, with appropriate guidelines within which to act. In exercising its discretion in carrying out its regulatory functions, the Council shall have regard to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy document.
- 1.5 The policy was last updated in October 2016, following review and consultation with the trade and members of the public.

- 1.6 Since the policy has come into effect the Environmental Health Manager has received several requests from the trade for the policy to be amended.
- 1.7 Permission is therefore being sought by members to go out to consult on proposed changes to the policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are recommended to approve that officers go out to consult on of the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, using the form within Appendix B. The results of the consultation will then be presented at the next full meeting of the Licensing Committee in October 2017.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Environmental Health Manager has received the following requests from the trade. The requests received are provided in Appendix C.
- 3.2 Where a relevant service appears to have a directly relevant input, pre-consultation has been made in order to establish relevant opinions. Where this occurred it has been included below.
- 3.3 Removal of the need for licensed vehicles to carry a first aid kit. The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust has advised that they would like to see the practice of drivers of licensed vehicles continuing to carry first aid kits, if nothing else other than for their own treatment.
- 3.4 Removal of the need for licensed vehicles to carry a fire extinguisher. Cambridgeshire Fire & Safety Service were approached and expressed their support for licensed vehicles carrying a fire extinguisher.
- 3.5 The requirement for a licensed vehicle to carry a fire extinguisher and first aid kit is provided by the following:
 - City of Cambridge Hackney Carriage Bye Law 3*
 - Vehicle Licence Conditions (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles)
 - FTA Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles – *National Inspection Standards* – adopted October 2016
 - **fire extinguisher only*

- 3.6 Change of age limits for vehicles. Currently the policy provides that a new vehicle cannot be granted a licence if it is more than 4 years old. Additionally a renewal will not be granted to a vehicle more than 9 years old. It has been suggested that vehicles older than 4 years could be granted a new licence, although the 9 year age limits for renewals should remain. The Environmental Quality and Growth Team have advised that they would prefer to see the 4 year limit for new vehicle licences, kept as existing, in order to not erode air quality standards.
- 3.7 Adding a condition attached to the licences of all Hackney Carriage Vehicles to carry a card payment machine and accept debit/credit card payments.
- 3.8 It is understood that the vehicles of all Cambridge City Licensed Taxis (CCLT) members currently carry a card reader. Furthermore, in January 2014 Licensing Committee agreed to include a maximum 5% surcharge on the 'Hackney Carriage Table of Fares' for fares where a debit or credit card payment is taken.
- 3.9 Adding a livery requirement for all Hackney Carriage Vehicles. This could, for example, be a colour scheme exclusively for Hackney Carriage Vehicles, which would help the public to distinguish between a Hackney Carriage Vehicle and a Private Hire Vehicle. 'Cambridge Blue' has been suggested as a possible option.
- 3.10 Adding a condition attached to all vehicle licences that CCTV be installed, be locked, and only accessed by the licensing authority and Police. This would provide additional safety to both the public and drivers where potential issues arise.
- 3.11 Allowing rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles. Currently the policy provides that all new licensed Hackney Carriages must be side loading; the Council will not licence rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is proposed to undertake a 5 week consultation on the proposals from Monday 31st July 2017 to Sunday 3rd September 2017.
- 4.2 The consultation will be advertised through a variety of means including:

- Letters to licence holders;
- Contact with the trade and key stakeholders;
- Taxi Newsletter – due to be published mid-August;
- Taxi Trade Forum – Friday 4th August 2017; and
- Published on the council website.

4.3 The proposed consultation document can be found as Appendix C.

4.4 All feedback is encouraged and all comments will be considered as part of the review and in preparation of the final policy document.

4.5 The results of the consultation exercise will be put to Members at the next meeting of Licensing Committee in October 2017 to take account of the feedback from the trade and other stakeholders in order to consider any amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Licensing Committee and the Commercial & Licensing Team have a responsibility to ensure that the policies and procedures which are in place are robust enough to ensure that only fit and proper persons hold a licence and that the Council supports the licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade in protecting the public.

5.2 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy is designed to put the Council's licensing requirements into practice and in order to deliver a transparent, accountable and efficient licensing service, the Council welcomes the opportunity to consult and review the existing policy.

6. IMPLICATIONS

(a) Financial Implications

Provision is made in the council's budget for the taxi licensing service, which is run on cost recovery basis. The cost of the consultation will form a part of the administration function.

(b) Staffing Implications

Existing staff resources will absorb the consultation and review of the policy, along with any changes arising from the review.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has not yet been undertaken but will be carried out on the reviewed policy after the consultation process has been completed and prior to any changes to the policy being formally adopted.

(d) Environmental Implications

Nil.

(e) Procurement

Nil.

(f) Consultation and communication

There will be a formal consultation on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy with the trade and other key stakeholders. This will be through a variety of means including the Trade Forum and on our website.

(g) Community Safety

Cambridge City Council has a duty to provide a safe and secure taxi service. The Council has a responsibility to review, consult and publish the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy on a regular basis, or it could be believed that the Authority's policy is not sound.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

(Available online at: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-policy.pdf>)

Appendix B – Consultation Document

Appendix C – Requests from the trade to change policy

To inspect these documents contact Alex Beebe on extension 7723.

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Alex Beebe on extension 7723.

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