



1 Item

1.1 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE TAXI POLICY

To:

Licensing Committee [30/09/2019]

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 Under the powers conferred to Cambridge City Council under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, (as amended), Cambridge City Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Dual Licence Drivers as well as vehicle proprietors and Private Hire Operators within the City.

- 1.2 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy (the 'policy') was produced in order to provide the Council, its officers, the trade and the public with appropriate guidelines that put the Council's licensing requirements into practice in a clear and transparent manner. 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.

- 1.3 The current Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy applies to all drivers, vehicles and operators and was last updated in July 2019.
- <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/5431/hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-licensing-policy.pdf>
- 1.4 The trade has made contact with Environmental Health Manger enquiring why the requirement of contact details being displayed on operator door signs has not been enforced. (Appendix A).
- 1.5 Within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle taxi policy it states *“Private Hire vehicles: Must display door signs which detail the name and contact information of the Operator fulfilling the booking, along with the notification of ‘Private Hire: Pre-booked only’.*
- 1.6 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle handbook states *“both the driver and front passenger doors in a prominent position, the name and contact details of the Operator fulfilling the booking must be displayed”.*
- 1.7 At present the meaning of “contact information” and “contact details” can describe a variety of contact methods including website, app, and telephone number.
- 1.8 After consideration, the decision to go out for consultation was made. The consultation would look at amending the current policy requirement, to require the mandatory display of a contact telephone number on operator door signs for Private Hire Vehicles. Consultation document can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.9 The Consultation took place from 1 August 2019 until 31 August 2019, 44 responses were received and can be found in Appendix C.

1.10 Members are now requested to review responses received during public consultation and determine, if there should be a mandatory requirement for Operator door signs to have a contact telephone for their Private Hire vehicles.

1.11 Members are also requested to consider timescale for implementation.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are recommended to consider consultation responses and agree;

2.1.1 To amend the policy to require the mandatory display of a contact telephone number on operator door signs for private Hire Vehicles.

2.1.2 Operators to provide door signs with their telephone number to private hire drivers/vehicles that are registered with them.

2.1.3 All vehicles that are registered with an operator, to display door sign with contact telephone number as of 1 January 2020.

3. Background

3.1 Cambridge City Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Dual Licence Drivers as well as vehicle proprietors and Private Hire Operators within the City.

3.2 In doing so, Cambridge City Council seeks 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

- 3.3 Under the powers conferred to Cambridge City Council under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, (as amended), the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy document (the 'policy') was produced in order to provide the Council, and Council Officers, who are required to administer the licensing function, with appropriate guidelines within which to act.
- 3.4 The policy is designed to put the Council's licensing requirements into practice and assist in the delivery of a transparent, accountable and efficient licensing service. It additionally, assists in ensuring 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.
- 3.5 Cambridge City Council taxi licensing team is available for members of the public and trade to contact. Contact can be for a variety of reasons including raising complaints against drivers and/ or vehicles, in addition to raising concerns.
- 3.6 Cambridge City Council is only available during core working hours Monday to Friday. This means that members of the public or trade cannot make contact with office staff, Friday evening to Monday morning, in addition to public bank holidays.
- 3.7 Taxi services are a 24 hour service, 7 days a week, which means, at any time members of the public may come across an issue they wish to raise. If this is to occur during council non- office hours, this leaves a delay in addressing reports or complaints from customers. A delay in addressing particular issues may leave members of the public at risk for example, a report of vehicle having one rear light not working.
- 3.8 The addition of a telephone number on operator door sign will provide any member of the public, not only those who enlisted the operator, a means of contacting the operator at any time they may witness an issue or have concerns regarding a driver, or vehicle. This is especially important during the non-council office hours.

3.9 It is important that customers have the option to contact the private hire operator directly via a telephone number.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

Costs of updating private hire door signs with operator telephone number will be borne by operators.

b) Staffing Implications

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

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Nil.

d) Environmental Implications

Nil.

e) Procurement Implications

Nil.

f) Community Safety Implications

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. The addition of contact telephone number on door signs provides members of the public additional means of reporting concerns, which can then be looked into quickly.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

5.1 Consultation was held from 1 August 2019 to 31 August 2019.

5.2 The consultation was advertised through a variety of means including

- Email to license holders;
- Taxi Trade Forum – July 2019;

- E-mail to the trade and Key stakeholders; and
- Publication on the City Council website.

5.3 Consultation document can be found on as (Appendix B)

5.4 All feedback was encouraged from license holders, taxi trade and key stake holder. All comments are to be considered as part of the review and in preparation of the final policy document.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – E-mail from the Trade

Appendix B – Consultation Document

Appendix C – Consultation responses

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Wangari Njiiri , Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, tel: 01223 - 458533, email: wangari.njiiri@cambridge.gov.uk.