



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policies and Procedures A Consultation



Worcestershire
Regulatory Services
Supporting and protecting you

Why is this consultation taking place now?

The Council has considered a report from the Bromsgrove Taxi Association which highlighted a number of concerns with the existing policies and procedures. The report also suggested some potential amendments to the existing policies and procedures.

The issues that concern both the Bromsgrove Taxi Association and the Council are the imbalance between the number of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles licensed in the District. It is felt that current policies and procedures do not encourage a healthy balance between the two different sectors of the licensed vehicle trade and are leading to an over proliferation of Hackney Carriage vehicles plying for hire in the District.

There is also a perception from the licensed trade that the requirements placed on those applying for licences from Bromsgrove District Council are not as stringent as those in other neighbouring authorities. It is felt that this may be leading to those who cannot meet the requirements in other areas coming to Bromsgrove to obtain licences as an alternative, adding to the over proliferation of Hackney Carriage vehicles plying for hire in the District.

Finally there is concern from the Council that there are very few licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles plying for hire in the District that are capable of carrying a wheelchair user whilst they remain seated in their wheelchair.

The Council is keen to make clear that it is not pursuing any particular changes to policies and procedures with a view to providing protection from competition for the existing licensed trade. However the Council is considering making changes that will improve standards and confidence in the licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade in the District.

The Council has decided to carry out consultation on some proposed changes with those who would be affected if the changes were made, including:

- Licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers
- Licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Proprietors
- Licensed Private Hire Operators
- Relevant Trade Associations
- West Mercia Police
- VOSA
- Worcestershire County Council – School / College Transport
- Organisations representing the elderly and the disabled.
- Residents and those that represent them

How long does this consultation period last for?

This consultation is open for responses until **31st July 2015**.

Where should I send my response to this consultation?

Consultation responses should be forwarded to:

Taxi Consultation – Bromsgrove
Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY11 7WF

Alternatively responses can be submitted to the Council by email using the subject line “Taxi Consultation – Bromsgrove” and sent to wrsenquiries@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Will the Council listen to my opinions?

The Council will consider and have regard to all responses it receives during this consultation exercise before deciding whether to proceed with making changes to the existing policies and procedures.

Consultation Questions

Part A – Driver Licensing

The Council is considering introducing a “private hire only” licence alongside the dual hackney carriage and private hire driver licence is currently issues.

The licensing requirements for this new type of licence would be the same as for the dual licence, but the “knowledge test” taken would be tailored to the private hire sector of the trade only with less emphasis placed on elements of local geographic knowledge that is more relevant those licensed to drive hackney carriage vehicles.

Do you agree with this proposal?

YES

NO

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

The Council is considering requiring all new applicants for licences to drive Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire vehicles to undertake a driving standards test.

Do you agree with this proposal?

YES

NO

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

The Council is also considering requiring all licence holders who accumulate more than six penalty points on their DVLA licence to undertake a driving standards test.

Do you agree with this proposal?

YES

NO

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

The Council is considering requiring all new applicants for licences to drive Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire vehicles to undertake an “essential skills” test which would cover matters such as basic mathematics, map reading, communication skills etc.

Do you agree with this proposal?

YES

NO

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

The Council is considering limiting new applicants to three attempts at passing both the knowledge and essential skills tests before they are barred from attempting the tests again for six months.

Do you agree with this proposal?

YES

NO

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Part A – Vehicle Licensing

The Council is considering introducing a requirement that new hackney carriage vehicles entering the licensed fleet are under five years of age when first licensed. Currently a vehicle can be anything up to ten years of age when first licensed as a hackney carriage.

This policy change would affect both new applicants for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences and those who are replacing their Hackney Carriage vehicles for any reason.

Do you agree with this proposal? (please circle)	YES	NO
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Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

The Council is considering introducing a requirement that, from a specified future date, all new vehicles being licensed at Hackney Carriage Vehicles must be a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). WAV means a vehicle capable of carrying a wheelchair user whilst they remain seated in their wheelchair.

The effect of this policy change would be to see the gradual phasing out of "saloon" type vehicles so that ten years after the Policy comes into effect all vehicles licensed by the Council to be used as Hackney Carriages should be WAVs.

Do you agree with this proposal?	YES	NO
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Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

If the Council decides to proceed with the policy change relating to new Hackney Carriages being WAVs do you think that “grandfather rights” should be provided in relation to the holders of existing licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages?

Affording “grandfather rights” to existing licence holders would mean existing vehicle owners would be able to continue replacing their existing vehicles on a “like for like” basis.

YES		NO	
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Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

If the Council decides to proceed with the policy change relating to new Hackney Carriages being WAVs and decides to afford existing licence holders "grandfather rights," how long should those grandfather rights extend for after the policy comes into effect?

1 year		2 years	
5 years		10 years	
Indefinitely		Other please specify	

Please provide reasons for your answer above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Do you have any other suggestions or comments in relation to the Councils existing policies and procedures in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing?

In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?			
Licensed Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver		Licensed Private Hire Operator	
Member of the Public		Elected representative	
Other (please specify)			

Your Details (optional)	
Name	
Address	
Date of Birth	

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.

All responses received will be considered by the Council prior to a decision being made about how to proceed.