

Bromsgrove District Council

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policies and Procedures Consultation

Results

Total responses: 25 (not all respondents gave an answer to all questions)

24 from licensed drivers / operators (96%)

1 from a Traffic Management Advisor of West Mercia Police (4%)

Question	Yes	No
<p>The Council is considering introducing a “private hire only” licence alongside the dual hackney carriage and private hire driver licence is currently issues.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>8</p> <p>34.8%</p>	<p>15</p> <p>65.2%</p>
Comments		
Wants ranks to be for independent taxi drivers only not those who work for operators		
Too many hackney carriages and not enough rank spaces or work for them		
Too many drivers in Bromsgrove already		
Drivers should have knowledge of the whole area		
In depth knowledge not required for private hire only		
Test would be too easy and too much reliance on sat navs		
Private Hire licence would provide invaluable experience and knowledge		
One licence is sufficient		
It doesn't need two licences		
Should stay as it is, no major difference anyway		
Leave it how it is		
Present test is fine		
Private hire jobs booked in advance so driver with limited knowledge can still carry out job effectively		
Knowledge equally important to both parts of the trade		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>11 45.8%</p>	<p>13 54.2%</p>
Comments		
Increased standards are a good idea		
Passenger safety and competence of driver		
Standard driving test should suffice		
Would improve driving standards		
Driving standards need to be improved		
Driving standards amongst some newer drivers are poor		
Drivers need to be competent due to public safety		
Feels it is unnecessary		
Passing driving test is sufficient		
Will incur extra cost and normal driving test is sufficient		
This is just making it harder for newcomers to come into the trade		
Passing DVLA test should be enough		
DVLA is satisfactory		
Extra cost and not necessary		
Increase cost and would not guarantee safe driving		
Provide benchmark - particularly useful for drivers from other EU countries		

Question	Yes	No
<p>The Council is also considering requiring all licence holders who accumulate <u>more than</u> six penalty points on their DVLA licence to undertake a driving standards test.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>3 12.5%</p>	<p>21 87.5%</p>
Comments		
Think it should be 10 points		
Drivers are responsible for public safety		
Unfair as taxi drivers are bound to pick up points for minor speeding offences		
Six points too low to warrant such actions		
Suggests 9 point threshold		
The council is not above the law		
Due to nature of the job drivers will accumulate points due to distractions from passengers		
Due to nature of the job drivers will accumulate points due to distractions from passengers		
Would uphold standards and keep the public safe		
Law of the land allows 12 points		
Depends on the offence. Licence should be reviewed for dangerous/drink driving but SP30 is an occupational hazard		
Sometimes it happens and I do not think that if you have six points it will affect your professional driving skills		
Very easy to get 6 points even in a day therefore inappropriate to judge driving skills through such a manner		
You could get 6 points or more in a minute so if this was enforced then drivers would lose out on their livelihood		
Anybody can get 6 points in one day as they are on the road all the time		
Extra cost - monitoring complaints would be better guide rather than number of points		
Penalty points can be picked up for many reasons and does not automatically mean a driver is dangerous		
Depends on what points were given for		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>16 69.6%</p>	<p>7 30.4%</p>
Comments		
Better standards are needed		
Taxi drivers should have good English language skills, basic mathematics and excellent communication / people skills		
NVQ Qualification should have covered this		
Would have no impact whatsoever		
New drivers are having communication difficulties		
Had comments from passengers about poor communication skills of some drivers		
Had comments from passengers about poor communication skills of some drivers		
Nothing more embarrassing than driver giving wrong change and not knowing where they are going		
Too many drivers coming through now		
Let them do the NVQ test first instead of having this proposal		
Existing tests are enough		
NVQ is required anyway		
NVQ required in first year of licence		
Being able to add and subtract is important to protect public and the driver. Being able to understand and be understood important.		
Good English most important. More tests is more work for licensing officers and more costs for drivers		
Basic skills should be demonstrated		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>19 79.2%</p>	<p>5 20.8%</p>
Comments		
Applicants should be prepared to learn enough to pass the test on the 1st attempt		
The Council should limit the amount of drivers in Bromsgrove		
If they cannot pass in three attempts they have not prepared properly		
Neither knowledge test or essential skills test matter with todays technology		
If they cannot pass first time they should not be allowed a licence		
Perception exists that Bromsgrove is an "easy touch"		
Perception exists that Bromsgrove is an "easy touch"		
So the applicant gets it right before they hit the road		
Fair enough		
Three failures would indicate more work was needed - 6 months seems fair		
Good idea - should pay for further tests		
If they take multiple times it is a memory test not a knowledge test		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>5 20.8%</p>	<p>19 79.2%</p>
Comments		
Think it should be 7 years		
Drive standards up and let the public travel in decent vehicles		
7 years would be better. Concerned about cost of replacing vehicles every 5 years.		
Age of vehicle does not matter - should be about condition and appearance		
Normal MOT test is sufficient standard of safety, regardless of vehicle age		
Concerns about costs of vehicles		
Happy with current rules and regulations		
Current calibre of vehicles is "shocking" and vehicles are bought "on the cheap"		
Current calibre of vehicles is "shocking" and vehicles are bought "on the cheap"		
No changes to existing rules required		
Bromsgrove is a small town and there is not enough work to enable them to buy new cars		
The revenue here does not warrant it		
Thinks the age limits should be extended and not reduced		
In current economic climate people cannot afford newer cars. Age limit should be 15.		
Current is fine but extending age limit to 15 years would be helpful		
Provided requirement for spare wheel is removed as this will become increasingly difficult with modern vehicles		
No evidence of need. Cannot afford extra cost of buying and insuring newer vehicles		
Hard to make a living already. Would force people out of work		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Do you agree with this proposal?</p>	<p>2</p> <p>8.3%</p>	<p>22</p> <p>91.7%</p>
Comments		
No unless funding provided to assist with upgrade		
Ten years is a generous period to bring it in		
40-50% of passengers are elderly and cannot access such vehicles. Most wheelchair users get on fine with normal cars and put chair in the boot		
Concerned about cost		
Companies should have at least one WAV with smaller companies they should have a WAV as they are unable to call a back up vehicle to provide the service		
For new hackney drivers only		
Limited market for the service and not a shortage of vehicles providing this service in my experience		
We are a rural town - people want to travel in comfort and style rather than a "black cab" vehicle		
The community here doesn't want it. We only get 3 - 4 enquiries per year requesting this.		
Not enough WAV work to justify. Very expensive. Elderly passengers cannot access WAVs easily. Other Councils allow saloon types. Not enough space on rank		
Would cost too much		
Cost would prohibit people licensing vehicles as hackney carriages. If there is demand, the market will adapt to meet it.		
Driver of two WAVs. Little demand for these in Bromsgrove. 3 request in last year. Financial implications.		
Very expensive. Would be overkill. People would leave Bromsgrove trade and cause shortage of taxis. Requests are rare for this type of vehicle		

Question	Yes	No
<p>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?</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>21 87.5%</p>	<p>3 12.5%</p>
Comments		
Drivers have not factored in having to buy WAVs		
With a ten year lead in period there is plenty of time to prepare for the change		
Concerns about cost of WAV		
Insufficient trade to pay for finance on expensive WAVs and pay household bills		
Insufficient trade to pay for finance on expensive WAVs and pay household bills		
From experience public seem happy with existing vehicles available and if specialist vehicle required there are some available		
This is a specialised thing which would incur extra training. I think the call isn't there for this		
Most drivers will leave the trade if this comes in		
But it is not fair to have different rules for different people		
But would not be fair on new drivers		
Existing drivers should not be forced into leaving the trade for cost reasons.		
Existing drivers should not be forced into leaving the trade for cost reasons.		
Otherwise expense would put existing drivers out of business		

Question	1 year	2 yrs	5 yrs	10 yrs	Indefinitely
<p>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?</p>	<p>1 4.3%</p>	<p>0 0%</p>	<p>0 0%</p>	<p>2 8.7%</p>	<p>20 87.0%</p>
Comments					
WAVs very expensive to purchase and the drivers are too old to take on loans					
WAVs very expensive to purchase and the drivers are too old to take on loans					
Has to be forever otherwise will not be considered grandfather rights					
10 years seems a fair period to allow to plan for change					
Reviewed every 5 years					
Expense would put existing drivers out of business					

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?

The suitability of prospective taxi drivers, driving standards and the mechanical condition of taxis has always been an area of concern for the police.
Any proposed measures that are sought to advance the quality of driving standards, the appropriateness of drivers to carry out this role, improved vehicle roadworthiness and disability access, whereby increased road safety is achieved would be welcomed.

Provide a shelter on the rank and a smoking area

Impose a dress code (smart/casual)

Provide CCTV on the rank

Cap the number of drivers

Make it a rule that applicants must live in the district

Remove mid-term test requirement for vehicles

Have more surgeries or longer surgeries

Allow spouses to drive "off duty private hire vehicles"

More enforcement against members of the public parking on taxi ranks

More signage is needed to stop the public parking illegally

Existing policies on providing a spare wheel and not being allowed tinted windows needs looking at

Extend age of vehicles

Test could be harder

Remove the requirement to carry a spare wheel – run flat tyres or a puncture repair kit should suffice