

**LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

14th March 2016

**APPROVAL OF UPDATED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE
HANDBOOK**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Wilkes - Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

In 2015, at the direction of the Licensing Committee, Worcestershire Regulatory Services carried out formal consultation on a number of proposed changes to the Council's policies and procedures relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

The results of this consultation were reported back to the Licensing Committee for consideration in November 2015 when a number of amendments to the Council's policies and procedures relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing were agreed.

The Licensing Committee are now asked to approve an updated version of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook, which has been amended to reflect the decisions taken by the Committee in November 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to RESOLVE to approve the amended Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook at Appendix 1 to take effect on 1st April 2016.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs involved in carrying out the consultation and updating the handbook were met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council's current policies in relation to the operation of Private Hire Licences and Hackney Carriage Licences are set out in the Taxi Handbook and associated guidance issued by the Council.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 At its meeting held on 23rd March 2015 the Licensing Committee considered a report on some changes that were being considered in relation to the Council's existing policies and procedures for hackney carriage and private hire licensing.
- 3.4 These proposals originated from the Bromsgrove Taxi Association and had been discussed by the Committee in November 2014 after which trade forums were arranged in February and March 2015.
- 3.5 The Committee considered a summary of the general response to the proposals from the trade forums and resolved to instruct Worcestershire Regulatory Services to carry out formal consultation on the proposals under consideration.
- 3.6 The consultation exercise was commenced in late April 2015 and originally ran until 31st July 2015. Further consultation was then undertaken with Members of Bromsgrove Engagement and Equalities Forum until 9th October 2015.
- 3.7 The Licensing Committee considered the results of the consultation exercise at their meeting on 9th November 2015 and resolved to amend the Council's existing policies and procedures in a number of ways which can be summarised as follows:
- The Council will begin to offer three types of driver licence – hackney carriage, private hire and a combined hackney carriage and private hire licence.
 - All new applicants for licences to drive hackney carriage and/or private hire vehicles to undertake a driving standards test.
 - All new applicants for licences to drive hackney carriage and/or private hire vehicles to undertake an examination of their "essential skills" as part of their knowledge test.

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- Any applicant who failed either knowledge test or essential skills test on three occasions would be barred from taking the test again for a further six months.
- Any new or replacement hackney carriage vehicles must be under seven years old from the date of first registration on the day the application was made.
- Removal of the requirement to carry a spare wheel if the vehicle has a suitable alternative method to enable a passenger's journey to continue in the event of a puncture.

3.8 In order to put into practise the decisions made by the Licensing Committee on 9th November 2015, officers have updated the Councils Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook. The amended version of this can be seen at **Appendix 1**.

3.9 The amended version of the handbook has also been updated to reflect changes in the law since the last version was approved and to reflect up to date contact information for Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

3.10 Members are now asked to resolve to approve the new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook to come into effect on 1st April 2016.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The carrying out of consultation on the proposals under consideration was intended to mitigate any risks associated with changing the Council's policies without sufficient evidence to justify such changes.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Amended Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook

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