

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICIES – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor P J 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

The Licensing Committee has previously approved consultation for some proposed amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policies. The consultation exercise has now been undertaken and the results of this exercise are now to be considered.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members consider the responses received during the consultation and RESOLVE whether or not to proceed with any of the proposed amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policies.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs associated with carrying out the consultation exercise 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. Whilst there are no scheduled reviews due to be undertaken in relation to the Council's policies, the two specific matters which resulted in the consultation have arisen as matters directly brought to the attention of the Licensing Committee. Any proposed changes to the council's policy should take account of the responses to the consultation.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 On 13th November 2017 the Licensing Committee considered a report that set out some proposed amendments to the Council's policies on the licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles and drivers, which are contained in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook.
- 3.4 The proposals related to two areas within these policies that have caused some difficulty since the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook was last updated in March 2016.
- 3.5 These first of these two areas was the requirement for drivers to obtain an NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving or an equivalent qualification within twelve months from the date of the grant of their initial licence.
- 3.6 The second area that has caused difficulty is the requirement in relation to vehicles licensed as Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicles that states the windows are not permitted to have a tint where this conceals the identity of the passenger inside.
- 3.7 Having considered the issues that these two areas of the policies have caused, Members approved consultation on proposed amendments that may assist with these difficulties.
- 3.8 A consultation survey was used to facilitate consultation with relevant parties. A copy of the consultation document can be seen at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.9 A copy of the consultation survey was sent to:
- All licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers
 - All licensed Private Hire Operators
 - National Taxi Association
 - National Private Hire Association
 - West Mercia Police
 - West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership
 - Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
 - District Councillors
 - Parish Councils
- 3.10 The consultation was also advertised on the Council's website and through a press release.
- 3.11 The consultation began in December 2017 and concluded on Friday 16 February 2018. A total of eleven consultation surveys were received back during the consultation exercise.

- 3.12 A table summarising the responses received during the consultation exercise can be seen at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.13 In addition to the consultation surveys that were returned, a response was received from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. This response can be seen in full at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.14 Members are now asked to consider the responses received during the consultation exercise and resolve whether or not they wish to make any amendments to the policies set out in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risks identified by this report relate to the Council either acting too hastily to change policy or choosing to disregard the issues raised by licence holders. These risks are being managed by the approach of seeking more information from the trade and considering all the relevant implications and carrying out formal consultation before deciding whether to proceed with making any changes.

5. APPENDICES

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| Appendix 1 – | Consultation Survey |
| Appendix 2 – | Summary of Survey Results |
| Appendix 3 – | Guide Dogs for the Blind Association Response |

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