

# REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY



Date: 13 Dec 2023  
Agenda Item:  
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Key Decision? YES/NO  
Local Ward N/A  
Members

**Regulatory &  
Licensing  
Committee**

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the planned review the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and to make related amendments based on feedback from consultees.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee approve the objectives and timeline for the review as set out in section 3.6.
- 2.2 That the Assistant Director of Operations, Regulation and Enforcement retains the ability to make minor variations to the policy in consultation with the Chair of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022 and related procedures guide the way in which we carry out the licensing functions in relation to taxis. It provides the overall framework against which licensing decisions will be made, and it sets out the conditions that drivers and operators are required to meet.
- 3.2 A meeting was held with licensed drivers and representatives of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) on 3 Oct 23. Drivers provided feedback about several matters that they would like to see reviewed which form the basis of this recommendation.
- 3.3 Officers also believe that improvements could be made to the current policy to ensure that swift and proportionate action can be taken to keep the public safe when conditions are breached. This could be within open and transparent parameters set by the committee.
- 3.4 The revenue to the Council from the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators is approximately £33,000 each year. All of this is invested in providing the licensing function, to facilitate the administration and processing of applications, compliance and enforcement activity, and related support functions. A concurrent review of fees and charges has been undertaken to ensure that all costs are being recovered. This will likely lead to an increase in overall revenue in order to provide greater capacity to undertake compliance and enforcement activity.

3.5 The review will therefore focus on the following key objectives:

- a. Age of vehicles. To consider increasing the age of vehicles that can be licensed.
- b. Electric vehicles. To consider levers that could be employed to increase the number of hybrid and electric vehicles. This could include discounted licences for electric vehicles.
- c. Wheelchair accessible vehicles. To consider levers that could be employed to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles and measures to support disabled travellers. This could include discounted licences for wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- d. Hackney carriage fares. To consider changes to prescribed fares to take account of inflation and to ensure they remain comparable to those set by neighbouring councils.
- e. Enforcement. To consider moving away from a penalty point system towards a prescribed list of contraventions and the related sanctions that would be imposed by officers. Combined with greater compliance and enforcement activity, this would result in increased protection of the public.
- f. Accessibility. The current policy is very long and duplicated in many areas, which reduces the accessibility of the document. The review gives an opportunity to improve the readability and understanding of the requirements for all parties.

3.6 The review will follow the proposed timeline of:

- a. Agree formal review of policy 13 December 2023.
- b. Further engage with users, taxi drivers and operators informally to capture all relevant issues through online, face to face and written engagement.
- c. Produce a revised policy for consultation and undertake a formal consultation process with relevant stakeholders.
- d. Present revised policy for approval March 2024 to the committee.

Alternative Options	1. No change to current policy. This will fail to acknowledge concerns of drivers and mean the Council continues with a overly complex policy.
Consultation	1. Drivers and operators would be consulted as part of the review. 2. Taxi users will also be asked to advise of concerns. 3. Relevant stakeholders will also be identified and asked their views.
Financial Implications	1. No financial implications are expected as part of the review.
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	1. No legal implications are expected as part of the review. 2. This committee retains the ability to determine policy for Hackney Carriage and Private hire regulations as set out in Schedule 1 of The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes

Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	1. The licensing of taxi drivers and vehicles supports aims around enabling people, shaping places and developing prosperity.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. It is anticipated that the review could lead to increased transport options for those with disabilities. 2. The EIA for the policy will be revised and updated once the review is undertaken.
EIA logged by Equalities Officer	No
Crime & Safety Issues	1. It is anticipated that the outcome of the review will lead to reduced crime and increased safety.
Data assessment	1. N/A
Environmental Impact (including Climate Change and Biodiversity).	1. It is anticipated that the review could lead to increased use of electric vehicles and therefore reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	1. N/A

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	Policy does not provide robust decision making framework	Yellow	Checking against legislation, case law, guidance and standards	Green
B	Adverse response to any changes	Yellow	Consultation prior to any key changes	Green
C	Results in policy that is unworkable	Yellow	Benchmarking against the policy of other Council's	Green
D				
E				

	<b>Background documents</b> <a href="#">Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022</a>
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	<b>Relevant web links</b> <a href="#">Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
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