


8 March 2017

Report of	Head of Professional Services	Author	Jon Ruder
Title	Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Policy		 282840
Wards affected	All		

This report seeks the Licensing Committee's views on the draft policy

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 The Licensing Committee's views are sought on the draft policy to date.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 The Council is carrying out a fundamental review of the taxi and private hire licensing policy. In the light of this the Sub-Committee's views are sought on the changes that have been made to date to the policy.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative option is to continue to enforce the current policy which now fails to comprehensively address a number of issues which have come to the fore in recent years.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The current policy comprises the policy and 20 related appendices; these require fundamental review. The attached draft policy reflects the work that has been carried out to date and it is brought before the Committee to seek its views before further work is carried out.
- 4.2 An initial meeting has been held with trade representatives and their feedback has been requested.
- 4.3 The key consideration of the Council and the overriding objective in the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators is the safety of the travelling public. In view of this and having regard to experience gained in dealing with applications and appeals it was considered necessary and appropriate to draw up a convictions policy and to amend the Council's penalty points scheme.
- 4.4 **The Convictions Policy** sets out the Council's stance in relation to convictions, including motoring offences. It is hoped that by making it clear, through the allocation of points and the use of the colour coded system, applicants will be able to assess prior to making an application, the likelihood of their being able to obtain a licence. It is also intended to be used as a guide to Members of the Sub-Committee in assessing appeals.
- 4.5 **The Penalty Point Scheme** has been in operation for a number of years and its use by the Council's enforcement officers has informed the decision to add a number of

additional points to the scheme. The points have been separated to identify under which legislation or policy the breach has occurred. Additional offences for the operator have also been included.

- 4.6 It is intended that the convictions policy and penalty point scheme will work in tandem. For example a new driver, with a 5 year old conviction for failing to comply with double white lines, will start his driving career with the Council with 2 points on his licence. If he is then caught charging more than the legal fare he will receive 6 points under the penalty point scheme which brings the total points on his driving licence with the Council to 8.
- 4.7 **CCTV** - The Council recognises that licensed drivers are a valuable asset to the Borough and drivers' safety and health is a key concern. In considering the installation of CCTV in licensed vehicles, the Council has had regard to the number and nature of complaints made by the public in relation to licensed drivers and to recent high profile cases which have highlighted not only the vulnerability of passengers to wrong doing but also the vulnerability of drivers to unfounded allegations. There are often significant difficulties in investigating such complaints, to the satisfaction of all parties, because of the lack of an independent witness. In the light of this it is considered appropriate to introduce a policy in relation to the introduction of CCTV. There are still a number of issues to be resolved in relation to the introduction of CCTV but the Committee's views are sought on whether this is something it wishes to see introduced and if so whether it should be in all licensed vehicles or whether it should be left to the discretion of the driver.

5. Standard References

- 5.1 There are no particular references at this stage to the Strategic Plan; publicity or consultation considerations; or financial; equality, diversity and human rights; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.