

24 March 2021

Report of	Licensing, Food & Safety Manager	Author	Jon Ruder ☎ 282840
Title	Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposed changes to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to bring it into line with the Guidance contained within the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by the Department of Transport in July 2020.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 That the changes highlighted in the Policy be approved for the purposes of an eight-week consultation with interested parties.

3. Reasons for the Decision

- 3.1 The Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards is statutory guidance and sets out the core minimum standards that are required to regulate better the hackney carriage and private hire sector. The Department of Transport therefore expects the recommendations within the document to be implemented unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Failure to adopt the standards will mean the Council is not compliant with the minimum standards recommended by the Department of Transport and a compelling case for this position will need to be made.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Department of Trade issued the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards in July 2020 with the intention of establishing minimum standards to better regulate the trade. A report identifying where the Council's Policy diverged from the recommended standards was considered by the Committee in November 2020.

6. Proposed changes to the Policy

- 6.1 The Policy has been further amended to bring it into line with the recommended standards and these changes are shown in red on Policy and Annexes attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The majority of the changes relate to the increased requirements around the fit and proper/safe and suitable test of all applicants and parties to a licence, as recommended in the statutory standards. The opportunity has also been taken to make some further amendments to improve the clarity, remove duplication and update processes and these changes are shown in green on the attached Policy.

7. Further work required

- 7.1 There are a small number of areas where work in relation to the statutory standards is ongoing. These are the authorisation of enforcement officers to work across district/borough boundaries and the information to be made available within licensed vehicles on making complaints. Further reports in relation to these matters will be brought to the Committee in due course.
- 7.2 The new Guidance requires the Council to assess its performance against its Policy. This will be done on an annual basis starting in the new Municipal Year. This review will give the full Committee an overview of the work of its Sub-Committees. It will also enable the Committee to identify any trends or areas of the Policy which will require revision or on which the Committee might wish to have further guidance.

8.1 Consultation and Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 In the light of the changes to the Policy an 8-week consultation period is proposed. Interested parties and licence holders will be asked to comment on the proposed changes and the outcome of the consultation will be brought before the Committee in due course. The consultation will be available for public consultation on the Council's website.

9.1 Community Safety Considerations

- 9.1 The changes proposed are designed to ensure that the Council's Policy protects the public, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable persons.

10. Strategic Plan References

- 10.1 The Policy aims to contribute to the Council's vision of the Borough by ensuring that the licensed trade plays a significant role in the work to tackle the climate challenge, as part of the Borough's transport strategy, and in their role as ambassadors in promoting Colchester to residents and visitors alike.

11. Standard References

- 11.1 There are no known financial, equality, diversity and human rights implications, risk management, health & safety, and environmental and sustainability implications in relation to this report.