



Licensing Committee

Item
8

20 March 2024

Report of	Head of Public Protection	Author	Sarah White
Title	Taxi Policy – Plate Exemption		☎ 506420
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report considers whether the Council should amend its current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to permit private hire vehicles, used exclusively for chauffeured work, to be black.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve, for consultation purposes, the amendments to the plate exemption policy and the private hire conditions to permit the licensing of black private hire vehicles exclusively used for chauffeur work.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The policy change to permit black vehicles has been requested by the trade to address their operational needs. With the appropriate conditions in place to ensure these vehicles can only be used in relation to chauffeur work, the change will not adversely impact the safety of the public.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To leave the Policy unaltered and to continue with the existing licensing regime.

5. Detailed Considerations

- 5.1 The Council has been requested by the Chairman and Group Spokesperson of the Licensing Committee to explore the possibility of permitting private hire vehicles used exclusively for chauffeured work to be black. The request to change the Council's Policy has been made to address the operational needs of the trade who cite the expectation of its businesses users to have a black chauffeured vehicle.
- 5.2 The licensing of private hire vehicles used exclusively for chauffeur work is carried out in accordance with the conditions under the Private Hire Vehicle Policy attached as Appendix 1 and the Plate Exemption Policy attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy does not permit private hire vehicles to be black because this would risk confusing these vehicles, which must be pre booked, with Hackney Carriages which can ply for hire and stand on a rank.
- 5.4 To ensure the safety of the public it is important to retain the distinction between private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. However, it is considered that this can still be achieved by restricting the use of black private hire vehicles to those vehicles used exclusively for chauffeured work. Only those vehicles that are licensed and granted a plate exemption would be permitted to be black. These vehicles could not be used in any other circumstances as private hire vehicles. The public will not be aware of their use as private hire vehicles as they will not be plated nor carry any operator signage. These vehicles would not be able to swap between plate exemption work and regular private hire use. There is therefore little if any risk of confusion for the public.
- 5.5 The proposed changes to the Policy are set out in Appendix 2.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Links to the priorities in the Council's [Strategic plan 2023-26](#).
Priorities: -

- To make our city a better place in which to live and work and visit.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The proposed changes would constitute a major change to the Council's Policy and therefore a consultation period of 6 weeks is proposed with the Trade to obtain its views before the Committee makes a final decision.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Any change to the Policy will have effect once approved by full Council. The Policy and supporting information will be made available on the Council's website.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications for the Council associated with the policy.

10. Standard References

10.1 There are no community safety, health and wellbeing, environmental or sustainability health and safety, risk management, nor equality, diversity and human rights implications.