

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy



Report to: Licensing Committee

Date: 17 June 2025

Lead Officer: Sasha Taylor, Assistant Director – Public Protection

Contributing Officer: Adam Sherwood, Premises and Taxi Licensing Manager

Executive Summary

- A** It is recommended by the Department for Transport (DfT) that Licensing Authorities should have a single, overarching and cohesive policy document that brings together all current taxi and private hire policies and procedures. Harlow Council held a 6-week consultation on its draft policy and is now ready to consider adoption of the policy.

Recommended that the Licensing Committee recommends to Ful Council:

- A** Adoption of the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (attached as Appendix B to the report), having noted any amendments through the consultation process.

Reason for decision

- A** The DfT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards sets out minimum standards for licensing authorities to apply with regards to certain aspects of the licensing regime. The draft policy was made available for comment during a 6-week consultation via the Council's consultation webpage.

Other Options

- A** The Council may choose not to have a taxi and private hire licensing policy; however, it should provide its reasoning not to follow the DfT recommendation.

Background

1. The council is responsible for licensing hackney carriage and private hire drivers and vehicles as well as private hire operators. In undertaking those responsibilities, the council has regard to the legislation available including case law, relevant guidance, best practice documentation and its own policies and procedures.
2. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 made provisions for the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions, to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. Although the focus of the standards produced, is on protecting children and vulnerable adults, it is expected that any passengers of these licensed vehicles will benefit from the recommendations, which aim to better regulate the taxi and private hire vehicle sector.
3. The Department for Transport (DFT) published its “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” for licensing authorities to consider when making policy decisions.

Issues/Proposals

4. The new policy document lays out the foundations of taxi and private hire licensing, and includes several recent requirements already been introduced by this committee in line with the guidance, the policy Appendices also list out all licence conditions.
5. The draft policy is attached as Appendix B to the report. Inserted text for the new policy is written in purple, with any pre-existing text such as licence conditions in black.
6. Any amendments to the draft policy since the consultation are in green text.
7. Previous policies that have been combined into the new policy include the General Enforcement Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing, National Register of Refusals, Revocations and Suspensions (NR3S) policy, Stretched Limousines Additional Conditions, as well as the separate conditions for each licence type.
8. The proposed draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was reported to the Licensing Committee on 11 March 2025. The Committee approved the draft policy for public consultation, which was undertaken from 1 April 2025 to 13 May 2025.
9. There were two responses received during the consultation, from The Children’s Society and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board, Essex County Council, these can be viewed in Appendix A.
10. Both respondents were in reference to driver training, a summary of any points made and officers response below:

a) Require licensees (as well as new applicants) to attend driver training and to consider mandatory refresher training.

i) Response: This refers to current policy that has been updated. This matter has been covered by a separate report on the delivering of driver and operator staff training, licensees shall attend regular mandatory training every 2 years (report to Licensing Committee on 11 March 2025).

b) Safeguarding element of training should include the wording 'child and adult' to ensure both areas are noted.

i) Response: The policy has been amended to refer to 'Child and Adult Safeguarding Awareness' training.

11. It is proposed that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy in Appendix B to this report be recommended for adoption at the next Full Council meeting.

12. The new policy shall come into effect on 18 July 2025.

Implications

Equalities and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be viewed at Appendix C.

Climate Change

None specific.

Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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Governance

The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards set out minimum standards for licensing authorities which includes that Licensing Authorities should have a publicly available cohesive single document. The proposed policy brings together a number of existing policies and pays due regard to the Standards. The policy has been consulted on and ready for adoption.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Consultee responses

Appendix B – Draft Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - Department for Transport -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>

Harlow Council webpage - Convictions Policy -
<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/business/licensing/taxi-and-private-hire-licences/driver-licence>

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

DfT – Department for Transport

The guidance – Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards