

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE**

**26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2009**

**Policy / Guidance relating to the  
Licensing of Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicles,  
Drivers and Operators  
Published in a Handbook**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>Head of Planning, Health and Environment</b>
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<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 - Consultee responses  Appendix 2 - Policy Guidance to Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval to adopt guidance / policy published in a handbook relating to the Licensing of Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators issued under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:**

- 2.1 **to adopt the Guidance / Policy to Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators, as set out in Appendix 2.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The prime aim of licensing of vehicles, drivers, and operators is protecting public safety.
- 3.2 Over recent years many changes have been made in respect of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing and Best Practice guidance has been published by the Department of Transport.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 In 2007 an internal audit of the Council's Licensing Team recommended that a new licensing handbook relating to Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators should be published.
- 4.2 Many licensing authorities have been required to change their existing policies with regard to applicants wishing to become taxi drivers and operators.
- 4.3 The Handbook was presented to the Licensing and Environmental Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008, who directed that a consultation period should commence until the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008.
- 4.4 The draft was circulated to key operators of the taxi trade, and published on the Council's web site, giving details of the document and its proposals.
- 4.5 Every driver was sent a letter stating that a copy of the document could be obtained from Duke House.
- 4.6 Several consultees have responded with their constructive comments, notably from the General Secretary of the National Taxi and Private Hire Association (*Appendix 1*).
- 4.7 The handbook has been changed to incorporate some recommended changes to the final draft (*Appendix 2*).
- 4.8 The Guidance does not introduce new policy on Driver or Vehicle Licences, but offers advice on how the Council will deal with :
  - the application process to newcomers of the taxi trade,
  - the relevance of convictions,
  - applications from foreign nationals.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report apart from the cost of printing the Handbook which has been accounted for in the budget.

#### **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A District Council has a statutory duty under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Transport Act 1985 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to license hackney carriage and private hire drivers and operators.

6.2 Information published in a handbook relating to these licences will be taken into account when dealing with new applications, as well as renewal applications for an existing hackney carriage/private hire/operator's licence, and also when considering whether to suspend or revoke an existing licence.

## 7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 There is no risk management issues arising from this report

## 8. **CONCLUSION**

8.1 Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles have a specific role to play in a sustainable integrated transport system.

8.2 It is important to provide clear information to current and potential applicants with a view to minimising cost and time spent by both the Council and the applicant for taxi licences.

## 9. **CONSULTEES**

- Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- National Taxi and Private Hire Association.
- Wyre Forest Licensed Taxi Drivers and Owners
- Worcestershire Local Authority Licensing Officers

## 10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.