

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

16 JULY 2019

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer/Report Author	Lorraine Neale
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendation:

1. That the amended draft Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy be recommended for adoption by the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee.

This report relates to the following Five Year Plan Key Objectives:

- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Licensing Committee	11 July 2019
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	16 July 2019

Amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 That Members note the consultation responses to the amended draft Taxi Licensing Policy and Officer responses at Appendix 1 to the report.
 - 1.2 That the draft Taxi Licensing Policy at Appendix 2 to the report be adopted.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators within the Borough of Maidstone. The existing policy was published in December 2015 and may be revised from time to time in keeping with the legislation.
- 2.2 The policy has been reviewed and revised as appropriate to reflect the changes made to procedures and processes since the Policy was first published in December 2015.
- 2.3 At their meeting on 28 March 2019 the Licensing Committee requested some minor amendments be made to the policy prior to consultation and agreed on a 6 week consultation to take place. The consultation was carried out between 11 April 2019 and 16 May 2019. Consultation took place with relevant organisations, Hackney and private hire drivers and operators. A copy of the survey result are attached at Appendix 1. The survey was circulated to approximately 8000 customers with 230 responses received back.
- 2.4 The Summary findings of the survey were:-
 - Almost two thirds of residents are in favour of the proposed changes to the licensing policy.
 - Although the response from the taxi industry was almost split across the three responses many of the comments submitted by drivers do not relate to the changes proposed.
 - The areas of biggest concern appear to be around the changes proposed to testing of knowledge and driver standards.
- 2.5 In response to Question 2, do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private hire Policy, there were 184 responses received and overall all respondents agreed to the changes by 56%, 28% neither agreed or disagreed and 16% disagreed, overall the amendments to the policy are agreed with.
- 2.6 There were 22 dissenting responses made in relation to Q2, 10 were from residents/workers and twelve from the taxi industry and largely they are

opinions and do not relate to the amendments made to the Policy. The comments from the trade mentioned.

- a) Air Quality and low Emissions – this has not yet been introduced and is not in the amended draft Policy. It is clear that the industry remains concerned over the possible future changes to emission requirements to the trade.
- b) Age of vehicles – no change has been made to type, age or emissions in the amended draft Policy.
- c) Driver Standards – comment was made that an electronic multiple choice test was not the way forward, this test has been in place for over two years and is under constant review. The policy has been amended to reflect the current knowledge test implemented two years ago and is not a new change to the amended draft Policy.
- d) Bullying and abusive behaviour by drivers towards each other – the draft amended Policy makes it quite clear that aggressive and abusive behaviour by drivers, either to passengers or each other will not be tolerated. Action will be taken should any behaviour of this sort be reported to Licensing Officers for failure to behave in a civil, polite and orderly manner.

- 2.7 There were no significant comments made in regard to the amendments in the draft policy and no adjustments were deemed to be necessary, therefore the amended draft policy be adopted. The full survey results and comments can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 2.8 The Head of Housing and Community Services will provide an update at the meeting on any comments received from Members of the Licensing Committee who will consider the report at their meeting on 11 July 2019.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1. That the draft Taxi Licensing Policy at Appendix 2 to the report be adopted
- 3.2 Reject the draft Taxi Licensing Policy and leave the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy as it is.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the draft amended Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy be adopted, as not amending the document means our policy will not reflect current practises and procedures.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
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		(name of officer and date)
Impact on Corporate Priorities	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service or Manager]
Risk Management	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service or Manager]
Finance and other resources	The costs of administering the licensing function is recovered through the fees charged. The policy provides a clear decision making framework which supports the delivery of an efficient and effective service	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service]
Legal		Jayne Bolas, Solicitor Team Leader(Contentious)
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	There are no equality issues identified as this policy would apply equally to any proprietor of a Hackney or Private Hire vehicle in similar circumstances.	[Policy & Information Manager]
Environmental/Sustainable Development	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service or Manager]
Community Safety	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service or Manager]
Human Rights Act	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement	No implications have been identified	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]

6. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix 1 – Consultation response document

Appendix 2 – Draft Taxi Policy

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None