

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting19th April 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy Review

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to the scheduled three year review of the Council's consolidated Hackney Carriage & Licensing Policy.

The Licensing Committee had agreed a draft revised policy for consultation with the trade and other interested parties at its meeting held on 13th December 2011 (Min L51/11 refers) and further considered the responses received at its meeting held on 8th March 2012.

Cabinet was provided with both a copy of the draft policy and details of the comments received as part of the consultation; the main elements of which concerned:-

- Tinted Window requirements;
- Driver Training & Public Safety requirements;
- Accessibility;
- Vehicle Emission levels;
- European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP);
- Vehicle Testing.

Details were also submitted of the results of the survey referred in the report clarifying the level of driver qualifications, as well as a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment carried out on the draft policy.

Mr Fiddler (Hackney Carriage Trade Association) was present at the meeting along with members of the trade, and spoke in relation to the comments provided as part of the consultation.

Cabinet was also advised of the proposal to retain both statutory declarations and medical assessments, which had both been questioned by the trade, and were advised of concerns held by officers that the process for obtaining a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) Driving Licence through the DVLA did not require a CRB test, unlike all licensed drivers in Stockton who were currently subject to an enhanced CRB test

every three years. This effectively meant that vehicles capable of carrying more than 8 passengers may be driven by people who would not meet the criteria for hackney carriage or private hire drivers' licences. The issue had subsequently been raised in the House of Commons and officers were currently attempting to establish a voluntary scheme locally.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as presented in Appendix One to the report be approved.

2. the approach to driver training and public safety, as detailed in paragraphs 9 – 14 of the report be approve.

3. Officers be authorised to seek further legal advice with regard to requiring licensed private hire operators to have a proportion of wheelchair accessible vehicles within their fleet dependent on the number of vehicles they operate and if that advice suggests that this would be possible, officers be requested to prepare proposals, consult with the trade and provide a report to Cabinet with potential changes to the policy for their consideration.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The introduction of the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy following this review will improve public safety, protect reputable traders and assist in ensuring that licensing application and disciplinary decision are made in an open and transparent matter. This will strengthen the Councils position when dealing with any 'taxi' licensing appeals.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 27 April 2012

Proper Officer
30 April 2012