

|   |                                 |                 |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>23 October 2013</b>  |                                 | <b>ITEM: 13</b> |
| <b>Council</b>  |                                 |                 |
| <b>Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Specification and Licence Conditions</b>   |                                 |                 |
| <b>Report of:</b> Councillor Mike Stone, Chair of the Licensing Committee   |                                 |                 |
| <b>Wards and communities affected:</b><br>All   | <b>Key Decision:</b><br>Non key |                 |
| <b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Gavin Dennett, Head of Public Protection  |                                 |                 |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Lucy Magill, Director of Environment and Public Protection   |                                 |                 |
| <b>This report is</b> Public  |                                 |                 |
| <b>Purpose of Report:</b> Adopt a reviewed Thurrock Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle specifications and Licence Conditions following public consultation and consideration by the Licensing Committee. |                                 |                 |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Local Authorities through legislation have powers to set policy and conditions which it requires its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles to meet. This report sets out the proposals for changes to the current conditions and vehicle specification, following public consultation and consideration by the Licensing Committee.

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **1.1 That Council:**

- a) Adopt the vehicle specification and licence conditions for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles (Appendix B).**
- b) Agree that the revisions should not come into effect until the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 at the earliest.**

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Local Authorities have the power to set conditions and policy in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences.
- 2.2 The current Vehicle Specification and Licence Conditions sets out the type of vehicles that are considered suitable for licensing and the conditions that they must adhere to once the licence has been granted.

- 2.3 The vehicle specification is now dated and requires reviewing to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. The changes suggested are intended to enhance public safety, provide licence holders with the opportunity to keep well maintained vehicles for a longer period of time, and will allow for easier enforcement of the licence conditions by clarifying some areas of the specification.
- 2.4 These documents will form one taxi licensing policy which will incorporate all taxi related policy, conditions and specifications.

### **3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 The reviewed document was sent out for public consultation between the 20 May 2013 and 30 June 2013.
- 3.2 A letter was sent to all existing private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licence holders along with disability access groups and others locally with an interest in the taxi trade outlining the changes and inviting them to view the full document and make comments.
- 3.3 Detailed in appendix A are all the responses, with comments from the Licensing Department for each one including where it has been amended to incorporate the suggestions.
- 3.4 Following the comments received from the consultation the Vehicle Specification and Licence Conditions have been amended, a copy is attached as Appendix B.
- 3.5 The comments and responses received from the public consultation were considered by the Licensing Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013, where it was agreed that no further amendments should be made to the document and it should be referred onto Council for adoption.

### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

- 4.1 The Licensing Committee has already considered and discussed the responses to the public consultation and have agreed and recommended that the policy and conditions in appendix B be adopted by Council
- 4.2 This document exists primarily to ensure that the public using these vehicles are protected and that the vehicles used are fit for purpose and are safe at all times. Any changes to the proposed document further must be made with this in mind.
- 4.3 The changes will not come into effect until the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 at the earliest to allow sufficient time for the testing garages to be reviewed and informed of the changes to ensure a consistent and accurate implementation.

**5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 This revised document has been out for public consultation as set out in the body of this report.

**6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

6.1 None.

**7. IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**  
 Telephone and email: **01375 652277**  
**mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk**

There are no financial implications for Thurrock Council.

**7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**  
 Telephone and email: **01375 652087**  
**david.lawson@bdtlegal.org.uk**

The adoption of council policy is a Council function along with its publication and enforcement of its provisions. The Council, via its Licensing Sub-Committee retains overall discretion regarding enforcement of such policies and updates are important to keep them up-to-date and valid.

**7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**  
 Telephone and email: **01375652472**  
**sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk**

Any increase in the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles servicing Thurrock's Taxi ranks is positive in improving access to public transport for wheelchair users.

**7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- Thurrock Council's Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Licence Conditions.
- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Standardised Conditions Template 09.10
- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- Appendix A – Summary of consultation responses.
- Appendix B – Vehicle specifications and licence conditions.

**Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Paul Adams

**Telephone:** 01375 652187

**E-mail:** pxadams@thurrock.gov.uk