



Licensing Committee

Agenda

23rd September 2026

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Council Chamber, Civic Centre

Members: Licensing Committee

Councillors Clayton, Darby, Dodds, Dunbar, Feeney, Gaines (C), Gaiety (VC), Little, Napper, Nelson, Thompson and Wiley

1. Apologies for absence

2. To receive any declarations by members

3. Minutes

3.1. To approve the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 21st May 2026.

3.2. To confirm the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 20th October 2025, 10th November 2025 and 4th March 2026.

3.3. To confirm the minutes of the Regulatory Sub Committee held on 16th July 2025.

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

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4. Items Requiring Decision

- 4.1. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy – Hackney Carriage Colour Consultation (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

5. Any other business which the chair considers urgent

For information

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 9th December 2026.

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Hartlepool
Borough Council

Licensing Committee

Minutes and Decision Record

Thursday 21st May 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: 7:40 pm

Location: Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Adam Gaines (In the Chair)

Councillors: Ben Clayton, Rob Darby, Matthew Dodds, Ed Doyle, Martin Dunbar, Tom Feeney, Scott Gaiety, Sue Little, John Nelson, Carole Thompson and Christine Wiley

Officers: Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Adam Gaines and Scott Gaiety declared interests as owners of licensed premises in Hartlepool.

Councillor Sue Little declared an interest as being in receipt of a licence.

3. Minutes

Minutes from 24th October 2025 – approved.

4. Licensing Sub-Committee and Regulatory Sub-Committee Memberships (*Director of Legal, Governance and Human Resources*)

The Principal Democratic Services and Licensing Support Officer reported that the Licensing Committee has four Licensing Sub Committees of three members dedicated to considering licences for premises and three Regulatory Sub Committees of four members primarily dedicated to considering licences for hackney carriage and private hire drivers. Licensing Sub Committees require a minimum of three members present as a statutory requirement. Memberships of these sub-committees must be determined by the Licensing Committee and it was felt appropriate to do this as soon as possible in case any requests to convene a sub-committee are received.

The Chair had been consulted on proposed memberships of the sub committees and had supported the following proposals which were submitted for the Committee's consideration:

Licensing Sub Committees:-

1. Councillors Gaines (Chair), Nelson and Wiley
2. Councillors Thompson (Chair), Clayton and Doyle
3. Councillors Gaiety (Chair), Dodds and Feeney
4. Councillors Dunbar (Chair), Darby and Little

Regulatory Sub Committees: -

1. Councillors Feeney (Chair), Gaines, Nelson and Wiley
2. Councillors Dodds (Chair), Doyle, Gaiety and Thompson
3. Councillors Darby (Chair), Clayton, Dunbar and Little

The Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, requires 'as far as practicable' that a local authority allocates seats on Committees and Sub Committees in the same proportion to reflect the number of Members in each political group to the

overall membership of the authority. The proposals submitted meet those requirements as far as possible.

Decision

That the memberships of the Licensing Act Sub Committees and the Regulatory Sub Committees as set out above be approved.

The meeting concluded at 7:45 pm

CHAIRMAN

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

20th October 2025

The meeting commenced at 10:00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Nelson (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jorgeson

Also Present: Councillor Dunbar as substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 for Councillor Thompson

Officers: Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Gemma Redfern, Solicitor Litigation
Claire Mcpartlin, Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

22. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thompson.

23. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

24. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025

It noted by the Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer that 23 April 2025 it was agreed as there had been no further discussions between the applicant and fire authority the meeting was to stand adjourned until such time as progress was made. Members had agreed this previously in the event that there was no progress by this date.

On 31 July 2025 notification was received via the Licensing Team that that the Fire Brigade had removed their objection to this application so a hearing would no longer be required as the licence would now be granted. The meeting was therefore abandoned. Members were informed of this

Minutes confirmed.

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2025

Confirmed.

26. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th August 2025

Confirmed.

27. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2025

Confirmed.

28. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2025

Confirmed.

29. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th August 2025

Confirmed.

30. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 31 – Review of Personal Licence BD – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (paragraph 1 – information relating to any individual and paragraph 2 – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

31. Review of Personal Licence BD: (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (paragraph 1 – information relating to any individual and paragraph 2 – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

Members were asked to determine an application for a personal licence. Full details are in the closed minutes.

Decision

Detailed in the closed minutes.

The meeting concluded at 10:10 am.

CHAIR

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

10th November 2025

The meeting commenced at 10:00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Officers: Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support
Officer

32. Meeting Abandoned

Following the withdrawal of the objections, the meeting was abandoned.
Members had been advised of the situation prior to the meeting.

CHAIR



Licensing Sub-Committee

Minutes and Decision Record

4th March 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Committee Room C, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Dunbar (In the Chair)

Councillors: Councillor Feeney as substitute in accordance with Council procedure Rule 4.2 for Councillor Reeve.

Councillor Little as substitute in accordance with Council procedure Rule 4.2 for Councillor Bailey-Fleet.

Officers: Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Gemma Redfern, Solicitor Litigation
Daniel Briggs, Senior Trading Standards Officer
Claire Robinson, Public Health Principal
Claire Mcpartlin, Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer
Angela Lucas, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

Also Present: PC Clare Lawton (Cleveland Police)
Lojan Ramash, Premises Licence Holder, Go Local, Victoria House
Michael Kheng, Legal Representative

33. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bailey-Fleet and Reeve.

34. Declarations of Interest by Members

None.

35. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2025

Minutes confirmed.

36. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025

Minutes confirmed.

37. Application for the Review of a Premises Licence – Go Local, Victoria House, 24-26 Avenue Road (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

Members were asked to review the premises licence in respect of Go Local, Victoria House. The review application was requested by the Local Authorities Trading Standards Team and was attached at Appendix 2. The review application made reference to the following licensing objectives:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder
- Protection of Children from Harm

The Senior Trading Standards Officer had provided a statement which was at Appendix 2 and was read aloud to Members. This stated that in October 2025 a test purchase was undertaken and the premises licence holder had allowed the sale of age restricted products to 15- and 16-year-old volunteers. A further test purchase was carried out in December 2025 in which an officer from the Trading Standards and Licensing Team had been sold a bottle of alcohol at 11:37 pm. The premises licence only permits the sale of alcohol between the hours of 08:00 am and 11:30 pm.

A statement and letters of support had been received from Cleveland Police, the Local Authorities Public Health Department and the Harms Outside the Home Team. They were attached at Appendix 8, 9 and 10.

A Member queried the numbers of young people with health issues in relation to alcohol. The Public Health Principle confirmed that the number of young people in treatment for vaping and alcohol use were increasing.

The Applicant's Legal Representative was in attendance and addressed the Committee. The current Premises Licence Holder had no involvement with the premises prior to November 2025 therefore it was felt the under-age sale incident should not be considered at this hearing. In relation to the sale of alcohol outside of the licensed hours, a representative of the applicant advised the member of staff who made this sale was still employed however had received a final warning and additional training had been put in place. The Legal Representative advised there are incident and refusal logs in place and are completed by staff. The Applicant brought the refusal log and passed this to Members.

A concern was raised by Members that it appeared only one member of staff had completed the refusal log. A representative of the applicant advised this was also logged in the till by members of staff.

A brief adjournment took place at this time to allow The Applicant to obtain a copy of the premises lease. Once obtained this was passed to Members. The lease showed that the premises had been taken over by The Applicant in November 2025.

Decision

The Applicant, Trading Standards sought a review of the Premise License of Go Local of 24-26 Avenue Road, Hartlepool on the basis that the Licence Holder, Mr Kulasingam Chandramohan had sold alcohol and tobacco products to minors during a undercover test purchase operation which took place on 10 October 2025 and, that the present Licence Holder, Mr Lojan Ramesh was in breach of his Licence conditions when a member of staff sold alcohol outside of the Licence Operating Hours on 19 December 2025.

Mr Chandramohan had not responded to requests that he attend interview under caution with the trading standard officers in respect of the offences committed on 10 October 2025 and had since become untraceable and had therefore not faced any prosecution proceedings to date.

On 25 November 2025 the Local Authority had received an application for transfer of the Premise Licence Holder and Designated Premise Supervisor for Go Local which were granted.

Mr Ramesh was the Licence Holder at the time of the second test purchase operation on 19 December 2026 which was a test purchase of alcohol by an under cover officer

The new Licence Holder, Mr Ramesh attended the sub-committee hearing with representation and a friend to assist him in making representations regarding the Licence Review.

A representative of Cleveland Police and Hartlepool Borough Council's Public Health Department attended the meeting to support the Licence Review and gave evidence as to the concerns about the harms caused by the criminal behaviour and licence breach. A letter of support from Hartlepool Borough Council's Harms Outside of the Home Team was also read to the sub-committee. All expressed concerns that the Licensing Objectives had been undermined by the actions of the Licence Holder. In particular the following Licensing Objectives were cited:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder
- Protections of Children from Harm

Representations via Mr Ramesh's representative were heard regarding the present ownership and management of the Go Local Shop, in that ownership had only been recently taken over by Mr Ramesh in November 2025. This was affirmed by a Lease

agreement dated 12 November 2025 which had been obtained and put before the subcommittee (following a short adjournment during the hearing whilst the same had been obtained by Mr Ramesh). Mr Ramesh represented that he was not aware of, nor involved in the sale of alcohol and tobacco products made by the previous owner and Licence Holder Mr Chandramohan. He stated had no connections to the previous owner or the shop at the material time and only took over the Go Local Lease on 12 November 2025, after the event. It was stated that Mr Chandramohan was not still connected to the business or premises and only 1 member of staff remained employed from the time of the prior ownership and that staff member was not responsible for the illegal sale of alcohol or tobacco.

In respect of the incident on 19 December 2026, the statements and evidence supported the fact that; not only did the member of staff who sold alcohol outside of the Licensable Hours (sold at 11.37pm when Licensable Hours were until 11.30) know that they were selling outside of the Licensable Hours, but there was also evidence showing that they deliberately attempted to evade detection by asking the customer to conceal the purchase upon leaving the shop.

The representative of Mr Ramesh indicated that the staff member responsible for the sale was still employed but was currently on his final written warning for the actions. Further training had been introduced and measures to demonstrate and ensure compliance moving forward were in place and all other Licensing Conditions were previously adhered to with no previous issues being raised by the responsible authorities.

In making their determination, Members carefully considered the evidence before them, within the context of the Hartlepool Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 and Draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2026, along with the Revised Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003.

The committee accepts that illegal sales of alcohol and tobacco items is criminal and present a danger to a danger to children. The previous Licence Holder and current Designated Supervisor had allowed the illegal sales and as such the new Licence Holder could not be ascribed the actions as a matter of fact. As was demonstrated by the production of a Lease Agreement dated 12 November 2026, the ownership of the business had changed post the illegal sales.

With regard to breaches of the Premise Licence conditions which had observed pertaining to the out of Licensable Hours sale; whilst it could be ascribed to the new Licence Holder, it was accepted that it was a member of staff responsible for the actions and that steps had been taken to address that behaviour moving forward.

Unanimous decision to issue a formal warning in respect of the sale of alcohol out of Licensable Hours. A formal warning is deemed necessary and proportionate to ensure that the Licensing Objectives are upheld moving forward. The same serves as a warning that any further breaches of the Licence Conditions would inevitably lead to

more serious sanctions in the future with regards to the Premise Licence, should any be brought to the attention of the responsible authorities.

The meeting concluded at:

Time: 12:50 pm

CHAIRMAN

REGULATORY SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

16th July 2025

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Matthew Dodds (In the Chair)

Councillor: Sue Little, Amanda Napper

Also Present: Councillor John Nelson as substitute for Councillor Gary Allen in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Officers: Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Gemma Redfern, Solicitor Litigation
Sophie Kerrigan, Observer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer
Claire Mcpartlin, Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Gary Allen.

2. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May 2025

Confirmed.

4. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of

the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 38 – Private Hire Driver Licence LC – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para. 1).

Minute 39 – Private Hire Driver Licence RN – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para. 1).

- 5. Private Hire Driver Licence LC** (*Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)*) This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1) information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members were asked to determine whether an applicant was a fit and proper person to hold a private hire drivers' licence. Further details in the closed minutes.

Decision

Detailed in the closed minutes.

- 6. Private Hire Driver Licence RN** (*Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)*) This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1) information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members were asked to determine whether an applicant was a fit and proper person to hold a private hire drivers' licence. Further details in the closed minutes.

Decision

That the meeting be adjourned and reconvened to a future date.

CHAIR



Licensing Committee

23rd September 2026

Report of: Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)

Subject: PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE
LICENSING POLICY – HACKNEY CARRIAGE
COLOUR CONSULTATION REPORT

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. Purpose of Report

2.1. To consider the request for the Licensing Authority to review our Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy requirements in relation to Hackney Carriage colour.

2.2. To provide feedback following the formal consultation exercise relating to the colour of Hackney Carriage vehicles in Hartlepool.

3. Background

3.1. Hartlepool Borough Council is the statutory licensing authority for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators that work within the borough.

3.2. The Council has a Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy that details the standards that are expected of drivers, vehicles and operators in order to ensure the safety and comfort of the travelling public.

- 3.3. A request was made to the Licensing Authority on the 1st September 2025 requesting an amendment to our current Policy in regard to our Hackney Carriage Colour. A copy of the letter requesting the Policy amendments can be viewed at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4. The request was brought forward to Licensing Committee on 24th October 2025 following consideration it was agreed that it would be appropriate to conduct a formal consultation to consider the views of the trade and members of the public.
- 3.5. The consultation was conducted between 8th July 2026 and 28th August 2026. This was publicised on the Licensing Authorities website and was promoted through Hartlepool Borough Council Social Media accounts. All licensed drivers, operators and vehicle owners were sent a direct link to the consultation.
- 3.6. The survey received 491 responses, with 418 respondents wishing for the Hackney Carriages to remain yellow. Full survey analysis can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.7. Some further detailed responses were received, and these can be considered at **Appendix 3**.

4. Proposals

- 4.1. While Blueline Group makes a compelling commercial argument regarding the financial burden of full vehicle resprays and the logistical barriers it presents to modernising their fleet with electric vehicles, this commercial perspective stands in stark contrast to overwhelming public and trade sentiment.
- 4.2. The survey results reveal a decisive mandate from the community, with **418 out of 491 respondents** explicitly wishing for Hartlepool's Hackney Carriages to remain yellow. While Blueline's proposed partial-livery and vinyl wrap alternatives offer a pragmatic compromise to lower trade costs, the Licensing Committee must carefully balance the economic concerns of an operator against a powerful and near-unanimous public and trade preference for maintaining the traditional, highly visible identity of the town's taxi fleet.

5. Other Considerations/Implications

Risk Implications	• Loss of Hackney Carriage licensed vehicles/ drivers if the Policy was to be amended in line with Bluelines request. • Loss of Blueline as an Operator within the borough if the Policy is not amended.
Financial Considerations	• Loss of Hackney Carriage licensed vehicles/ drivers if the Policy was to be amended in line with Bluelines request. • Loss of Blueline as an Operator within the borough if the Policy is not amended.
Subsidy Control	Not Applicable
Legal Considerations	Not Applicable
Single Impact Assessment	Not Applicable
Staff Considerations	None
Asset Management Considerations	None
Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations	None
Consultation	Public consultation has been undertaken through an online survey and via direct communication with the Hackney Carriage Trade.

6. Recommendations

6.1. That the current Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy colour requirements are not amended. The Policy states:

Colour

All hackney carriages, including all previously colour coded external trims, boot, door edges and frames, must be professionally painted or wrapped to a non-standard production shade of yellow detailed below: -

- Landrover AA yellow, Octoral No RO1000 FMB/LRC559
- Fiat Giallo Ginestra 2C, Octoral No F1258:93

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1. The survey results reveal a decisive mandate from the community, with 418 out of 491 respondents explicitly wishing for Hartlepool's Hackney Carriages to remain yellow.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for Licensing Authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-england>

- 8.2 Hartlepool Borough Council Private Hire and Hackney carriage Licensing Policy

[Taxi licensing policy | Hartlepool Borough Council](#)

9. Contact Officers

Sylvia Pinkney
Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Service
Sylvia.pinkney@hartlepool.gov.uk

Rachael Readman
Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services
Rachael.readman@hartlepool.gov.uk



Rachael Readman
Trading Standards & Licensing Manager
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

1 September 2025

Dear Ms Readman,

Hackney Carriage Colour Policy

As you may be aware or recall, in 2019 we asked the Council to consider changing its hackney carriage colour policy from yellow to a different colour and one that was widely available as a standard colour from most, if not all, vehicle manufacturers. Despite initial trade support, following public consultation and a change of trade attitude, the Licensing Committee resolved to retain the policy requirement for hackney carriages to be yellow.

According to the official Department for Transport Taxi & PHV Statistics for 2013 (the oldest data available), 2019 (the position when we last made a request) and 2024 (the most recent data available), the Council licensed 164 hackney carriages in 2013, 132 in 2019, and only 119 in 2024, a reduction in numbers of 28%.

The demand for and use of hackney carriages is in decline all over the country because of the customer convenience of using a smartphone app to book a taxi, usually a private hire vehicle, which comes to their location, avoiding the need to walk to a taxi rank and to queue in the rain for a hackney carriage. The global ride-hailing apps did not introduce smartphone apps to the UK taxi industry, but they did a great job at educating the public as to their use and convenience, transforming the taxi industry.

The decline in the hackney carriage trade is, despite its long and distinguished history, only going to continue, becoming less and less economically viable for owners and drivers.

While the Council's intention to create a distinctive fleet using a non-standard colour like yellow is understood, the reality is that wrapping or spraying vehicles to an acceptable industry standard now costs over £2,000 - on top of the vehicle price.

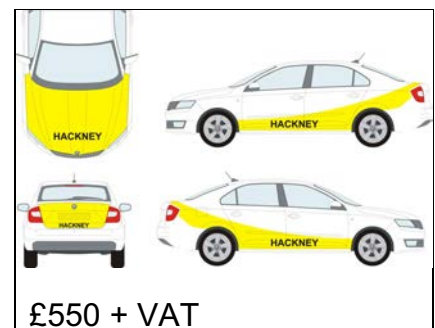
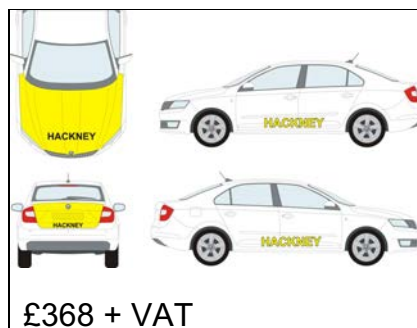
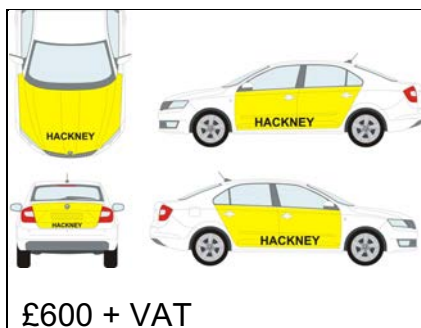
Due to the age policy, many owner-drivers cut corners with cheap spray jobs that leave door checks, pillars, and other areas unsprayed, which the Council allows, even though this is a breach of the policy requirements.

These poor finishes quickly fade, and the use of low-grade paint further devalues the vehicles - making them nearly worthless at trade-in.

The financial burden is unsustainable, especially with falling trade. We urge the Council to allow the use of a standard, off-the-shelf colour - chosen by the Council - that avoids these unnecessary costs.

At Blueline, we are ready to invest in newer vehicles (in particular, we are looking to introduce Tesla electric vehicles to our Hartlepool hackney carriage fleet, but such vehicles are only available in red, blue, black, white and grey), but only if this unnecessary financial barrier is removed. With top signs, plates, and other hackney markings in place, public confusion is not, and would not be, a concern.

We have taken the liberty of asking a local sign and graphics company to produce some images of partially wrapped or liveried vehicles, retaining the distinctive yellow colour already associated with Hartlepool hackney carriages to show that a distinctive look could be achieved at a much lower cost – the prices stated are for supply and fitting.



We do not specifically advocate for any of these designs, which are intended only to show that vehicles could be made to be highly distinctive for much less than a professional re-spray. We appreciate the Council might want to consider other design options and we would encourage the Council to do so.

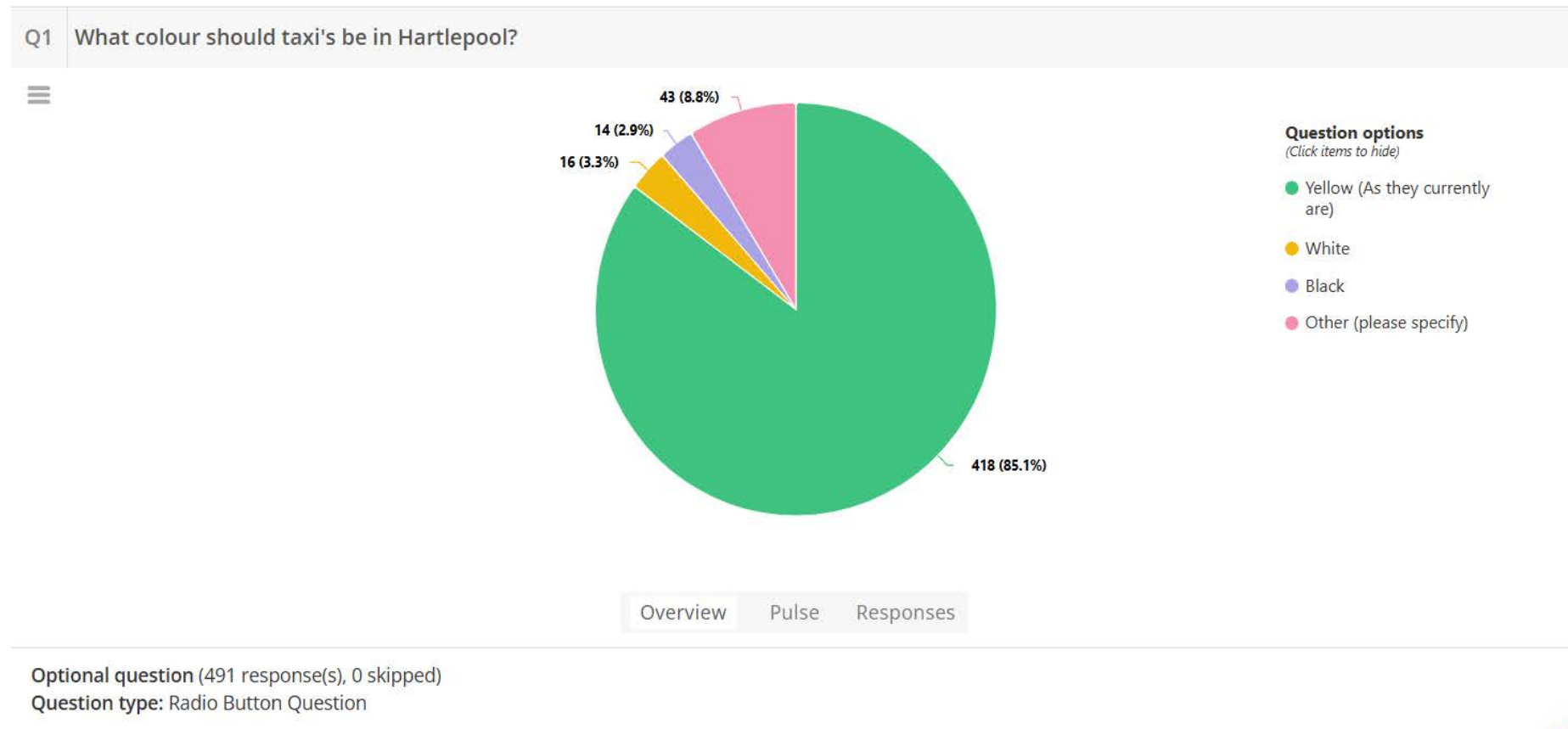
We respectfully ask the Council to review the current hackney carriage colour policy and the impact of this policy on the dwindling hackney carriage trade. Supporting a more practical and cost effective colour / livery choice will help to preserve the remaining hackney carriage trade for the public.

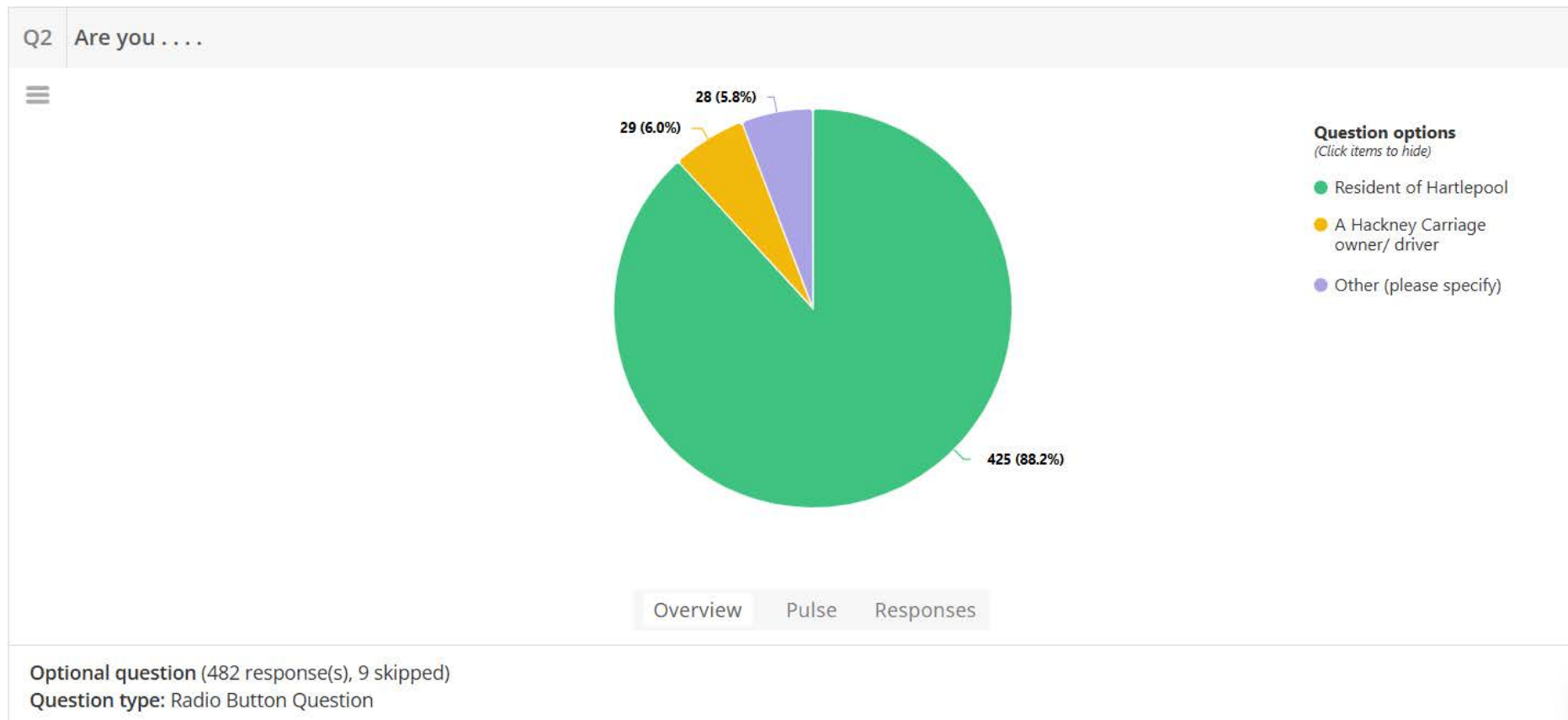
I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Shanks
Managing Director, Blueline Group
for on behalf of
Taxi Cab Services (Hartlepool) Ltd

Survey Analysis





WRITTEN RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

Written Response 1

10th July 2026

Licensing Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

RE: Formal Objection to the Proposed Change of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Colour

Dear Licensing Committee,

I am writing to formally register my strong objection to the proposal regarding changing the mandated colour of Hartlepool's Hackney Carriages from yellow to an alternative colour.

For over 30 years, the distinctive yellow livery has been a staple of Hartlepool's public transport infrastructure. Moving away from this established standard would be a mistake for several key reasons:

Public Recognition and Safety: The public immediately associates a yellow vehicle with a licensed, regulated Hartlepool Hackney Carriage. Alongside the roof sign, council roundels, and plate, the colour serves as an instant visual guarantee of safety—especially for vulnerable passengers, the elderly, and late-night revellers who need to quickly identify a legitimate taxi.

Brand Identity: The yellow taxi is iconic to Hartlepool. It sets our local trade apart from private hire vehicles and out-of-town drivers, maintaining a clear distinction that protects both local drivers and the traveling public.

Financial Burden on the Trade: Forcing a colour change introduces unnecessary financial strain on vehicle owners, whether through wrapping, respraying, or sourcing specific alternative-coloured vehicles in an already challenging economic climate.

The current system is not broken; it is highly effective, deeply trusted, and has proven its worth for more than three decades. The yellow colour scheme ensures maximum visibility and safety, and I see no justifiable reason to abandon it.

I urge the committee to listen to the trade and the public, and reject this proposal in favour of keeping our recognizable yellow Hackney Carriages.

Thank you for considering my representation. I look forward to hearing the outcome of the committee's decision.

Yours sincerely,
NH

Written Response 2

i want to the colour yellow we hav visited this policy not that long ago and kept it yellow. so why do we have to

look at this again blueline get back to durham with your white cars and stay there

Written Response 3

10th July 2026

Licensing Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

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The current system is not broken; it is highly effective, deeply trusted, and has proven its worth for more than three decades. The yellow colour scheme ensures maximum visibility and safety, and I see no justifiable reason to abandon it.

I urge the committee to listen to the trade and the public, and reject this proposal in favour of keeping our recognizable yellow Hackney Carriages.

Thank you for considering my representation. I look forward to hearing the outcome of the committee's decision.

Yours sincerely,

J E R

Written Response 4

Hackney Carriage Colour Consultation Response by Taxi Cab Services (Hartlepool) Ltd t/a Blueline

Dear Ms Readman,

With regards to the above, as this is something Blueline and I have written to the Council about in 2019 and 2025, I attach copies of those letters, dated 5 June 2019, 19 July 2019 and 8 November 2019; and 1 September 2025, and would be obliged if you would accept same as Blueline's response to the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

David Wilson



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Specialist licensing advice, assistance and representation ■ taxis ■ alcohol and entertainment ■ wedding venues ■ gambling

Ian Harrison
Trading Standards & Licensing Manager
Hartlepool Borough Council
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Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

Our Ref: BLT / HBC / HC
Your Ref:
Date: 5 June 2019
Please ask for: David Wilson

Sent by email only to:
ian.harrison@hartlepool.gov.uk

Dear Mr Harrison,

Hackney Carriage specification

As you know, I act for the Blueline Group which took over Navigation Taxis earlier this year and, as a consequence, now owns 33 hackney carriages licensed by the Council.

My client appreciates that, by virtue of the statutory provision prohibiting a private hire vehicle resembling a hackney carriage [Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 48(1)(a)(ii)], it is necessary for hackney carriages to be of a distinctive appearance.

The current requirements for a hackney carriage to be of a non-standard shade of yellow and to display the largest type of roof sign generally available certainly achieves that objective, but at very significant direct and indirect costs to the vehicle owner and / or driver.

The cost of respraying a standard saloon / estate type vehicle to the professional standard required by the Council is in the region of £1,800 (£1,500 plus VAT), as is the cost of having a vehicle wrapped completely in the specified non-standard yellow.

Wrapping a vehicle has the advantage over respraying that it allows for the wrap to be removed at the end of the vehicle's working life, returning it to the manufacturer's original standard colour, but this will cost about the same as the process for removing the wrap without causing damage is even more time consuming than applying it properly in the first place.

Yellow generally is not a standard colour in which the majority of vehicle manufacturers produce vehicles, which is presumably a very clear indication that the public at large do not like or buy yellow coloured vehicles. As a consequence, when resprayed vehicles come to the end of their working life, they sell for an even more depressed price.

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Alternatively, the owner can spend more money having the vehicle resprayed a standard colour, but the costs of doing so is probably more than the diminution resulting from the non-standard yellow specified by the Council.

My client has also caused enquiries to be made of Skoda as to the possibility of having new vehicles sprayed the Council's non-standard yellow as part of the manufacturing process, as this would likely be cheaper and, of course, have the benefit that the vehicle would not need to be resprayed or wrapped. The indication is that this would be possible, but only if an order were to be placed for 1,000 or more vehicles.

Whilst the Council specified roofsign is highly distinctive, I am sure you will appreciate that such a large non-aerodynamic roofsign has an impact, if not a significant impact, on fuel economy and, as a consequence, adversely affects air quality.

As I am sure you will appreciate, long after the Council adopted its current standards, the BRDO (now the Office for Product Safety and Standards, which itself replaced Regulatory Delivery, which replaced the BRDO) published the Regulators' Code (BRDO/14/705) in 2014 as a statutory code under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

Regulators to which the Regulators' Code applies, which includes the Council as the licensing authority for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, "must have regard to the Code when developing policies and operational procedures that guide their regulatory activities" [Regulators' Code, Introduction].

The first section of the Regulators' Code headed, "Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow" goes on to expressly provide:

- 1.1 Regulators should avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens through their regulatory activities and should assess whether similar social, environmental and economic outcomes could be achieved by less burdensome means. Regulators should choose proportionate approaches to those they regulate, based on relevant factors including, for example, business size and capacity.
- 1.2 When designing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and practices, regulators should consider how they might support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses and other regulated entities, for example, by considering how they can best:
 - understand and minimise negative economic impacts on their regulatory activities;
 - minimising the costs of compliance for those they regulate
 - improve confidence in compliance for those they regulate, by providing greater certainty; and
 - encourage and promote compliance.

In the foreword to the Regulators' Code, the Minister of State for Business and Enterprise states:

“Regulators within scope of the Regulators’ Code are diverse but they share a common primary purpose – to regulate for the protection of the vulnerable, the environment, social or other objective. This Code does not detract from these core purposes but seeks to promote proportionate, consistent and targeted regulatory activity through the development of transparent and effective dialogue and understanding between regulators and those they regulate.”

Whilst my client would like to see changes made to these requirements, it does not proclaim to know all the answers, so would like to ask the Council to consider this letter and the issues it raises and to propose and consult on any changes the Council might propose to reduce the costs of compliance, whilst complying with the law and retaining a distinctive licensed hackney carriage fleet.

My client would, however, tentatively propose that hackney carriages should:

- be a standard colour that is widely available from all major motor manufacturers, such as black, white or silver;
- be required to display large, clear signage that clearly identifies the vehicle as a hackney carriage licensed to ply for hire in the Borough of Hartlepool; and
- be required to display an aerodynamically shaped roofsign of more modest proportions, such as those required by Northumberland County Council, which could also be of a distinctive design, which would clearly identify the vehicle as a hackney carriage licensed to ply for hire in the Borough of Hartlepool.

As the defining features of a hackney carriage could transitionally be the signage and roofsign, the fact that a private hire vehicle was, during a transitional period, the same colour as a hackney carriage would not contravene the statutory requirement referred to at the beginning of this letter. Once transition has been completed and no private hire vehicle is the colour of a hackney carriage, the colour

However, if the Council were to analyse the numbers of vehicles that are currently licensed as private hire vehicles of each of the suggested colours (black, white and silver), it might be possible to select a colour for hackney carriages that would have no impact, or only minimal impact, on the private hire vehicle fleet.

I look forward to hearing from you with regards to this request in early course.

Yours sincerely,



David B Wilson

Licensing Consultant, Mediator and Trainer
Consulting Editor, Paterson’s Licensing Acts 2015-19
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Your Ref:
Date: 19 July 2019
Please ask for: David Wilson

Sent by email only to:
ian.harrison@hartlepool.gov.uk

Dear Mr Harrison,

Hackney Carriage specification

With regards to the above-matter, further to the roundtable discussions at yesterday's Trade Meeting, I should wish to expand on a matter raised by Ian Shanks, director of Taxi Cab Services Limited, which trades as Blueline Taxis.

Whilst some corporate account holders expressly request executive vehicles, which is something that Blueline Taxis is familiar with across the 8 local authority areas in which they are licensed, it is only its Hartlepool operation that has corporate account holders expressly refuse to accept a vehicle of a particular colour – yellow!

Blueline Taxis alone has 12 corporate account holders who have expressly specified that they will not accept a yellow vehicle. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, my client is not prepared to disclose the details of these 12 corporate account holders to the Council, unless the Council is able to give an assurance that such details will not be made public.

In addition to this, although currently impossible to identify and quantify, non-account customers also request non-yellow vehicles, but when this occurs, a specific type of vehicle is specified in the booking record by the call-taker, as my client does not have a 'non-yellow' car vehicle preference setting in its booking and dispatch system.

In the other 7 areas in which my clients are licensed, requirements in relation to hackney carriages vary, but even in those areas that have a colour specification for hackney carriages (such as black vehicles in Newcastle and white vehicles in Sunderland), corporate account holders do not refuse to have their bookings fulfilled by such vehicles.

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As stated above, this phenomenon is exclusive to Hartlepool or, more particularly, its yellow hackney carriages.

Whilst this may seem to be of little or no practical consequence or significance, very often a non-yellow vehicle has to travel from a more distant location than the nearest yellow vehicle to get to the customer's pick-up address.

This means it takes longer for the customer to get a vehicle; means vehicles and drivers are being less efficiently deployed and used; results in higher than necessary levels of vehicle emissions; and impacts on driver earnings, because they are travelling more 'dead miles'.

And, as I am sure you noted, other trade representatives present at yesterday's Trade Meeting also said that they also have customers who refuse to accept yellow cars. In the circumstances, the negative effects suffered by my client's customers, drivers and the environment are, in all probability, only the tip of the iceberg.

I look forward to hearing from you, as you progress the review of this and other matters, upon your return from holiday.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David B. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David B Wilson

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Our Ref: BLT / HBC / Policy
Your Ref:
Date: 8 November 2019
Please ask for: David Wilson

Sent by email only to:
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Dear Mr Harrison,

Taxi Licensing Policy

Consultation Response of Taxi Cab Services Limited trading as Blueline Taxis

As you are aware, I act on behalf of Taxi Cab Services Limited which trades as Blueline Taxis. It is one of the largest taxi and private hire companies in Hartlepool Borough.

Other parts of the group of companies that make up the Blueline Group are licensed by and trade in the areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council.

The Blueline Group is the largest taxi and private hire company operating across the eight aforementioned areas.

Unless the context so requires, I shall refer to "Blueline Taxis" whether I am referring to Taxi Cab Services Limited, any other company within the Blueline Group or to the Blueline Group.

For ease of reference, I shall start by addressing the three main proposals, as detailed in your letter to Vehicle Owners Working Group Members, dated 2 September 2019 and the report to the meeting of Licensing Committee on 11 September 2019.

Hackney Carriage Colour

It is appreciated that the consultation in relation to the proposed change in the colour of hackney carriages from yellow to white has evoked many emotional responses.

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Registered in England and Wales Company No: 11830848

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Therefore, before commenting on the proposal, I should wish to take the opportunity to remind all concerned that this is not a beauty contest nor a democratic vote.

By law a private hire vehicle cannot be “of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage” (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 48(1)(a)(ii)).

The Regulators’ Code (BRDO/14/705) applies to the Council as the regulator of the hackney carriage and private hire trades as a result of those trades being specified in an order made under section 24(2) of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Order 2006.

By virtue of section 22 of the said 2006 Act and the introduction to the Code, the Council “must have regard to the Code when developing policies” and is bound to follow the Code unless it concludes “on the basis of material evidence that a specific provision of the Code is either not applicable or is outweighed by another relevant consideration” but in such circumstances the Council is required to “record that decision and the reasons for it.”

The following provisions of the Code appear to be particularly relevant:

1. Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow.
- 1.1 Regulators should avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens through their regulatory activities and should assess whether similar social, environmental and economic outcomes could be achieved by less burdensome means. Regulators should choose proportionate approaches to those they regulate, based on relevant factors, including, for example, business size and capacity.
- 1.2 When designing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and practices, regulators should consider how they might support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses and other regulated entities, for example, by considering how they can best:
 - understand and minimise negative economic impacts of their regulatory activities;
 - minimising the costs of compliance for those they regulate;
 - improve confidence in compliance by those they regulate, by providing greater certainty; and
 - encourage and promote compliance.

That having been said, it appears from the report to the meeting of Licensing Committee on 11 September 2019 that these are uncontroversial assertions and that these matters are accepted by the Council.

In relation to the response of Blueline Taxis to the proposed change in colour from yellow to white for hackney carriages, Blueline Taxis wholeheartedly supports the proposal and thanks the Licensing Committee for consulting on its proposal.

Whilst some corporate account holders expressly request executive vehicles, which is something that Blueline Taxis is familiar with across the eight local authority areas in which it is licensed, it is only its Hartlepool operation that has corporate account holders that expressly refuse to accept a vehicle of a particular colour – yellow!

Blueline Taxis alone has 12 corporate account holders who have expressly stated that they will not accept a yellow vehicle. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, my client is not prepared to disclose the details of these 12 corporate account holders to the Council, unless the Council is able to give an assurance that such details will not be made public.

In addition to this, although currently impossible to identify and quantify, non-account customers also request non-yellow vehicles, but when this occurs, a specific type of vehicle is specified in the booking record by the call-taker, as my client does not have a 'non-yellow' car vehicle preference setting in its booking and dispatch system.

In the other seven areas in which Blueline Taxis is licensed, requirements in relation to hackney carriages vary, but even in those areas that have a colour specification for hackney carriages (such as black vehicles in Newcastle and white vehicles in Sunderland), corporate account holders do not refuse to have their bookings fulfilled by such vehicles.

As stated above, this phenomenon is exclusive to Hartlepool or, more particularly, its yellow hackney carriages.

Whilst this may seem to be of little or no practical consequence or significance, very often a non-yellow vehicle has to travel from a more distant location than the nearest yellow vehicle to get to the customer's pick-up address.

This means it takes longer for the customer to get a vehicle; means vehicles and drivers are being less efficiently deployed and used; results in higher than necessary levels of vehicle emissions; and impacts on driver earnings, because they are travelling more 'dead miles'.

And, of course, the non-yellow vehicle may be one that is licensed by another council, but used by my client under the subcontracting arrangements that now permit a private hire operator in one district to subcontract a booking to a licensed operator in another district.

As I am sure you noted at the Vehicle Owners Working Group meeting on 18 July 2019, other trade representatives present also said that they too have customers who refuse to accept yellow cars. In the circumstances, the negative effects suffered by my client's customers, drivers and the environment are, in all probability, only the tip of the iceberg.

At paragraph 3.7 n) of the report to the meeting of Licensing Committee on 11 September 2019, the Assistant Director (Environment & Neighbourhood Services) candidly stated:

"As there is no statutory requirement that hackney carriages must be yellow, and no evidence that yellow provides the general public with a higher level of

protection than any other colour, it is difficult to argue that yellow is a necessary burden on business.”

In light of this concession, the Council must appreciate that, if it were not to revise its policy in relation to the colour of hackney carriages and to specify a colour that is widely available from all vehicle manufacturers at no additional cost, it would be at risk of being legally challenged by judicial review.

Criminal Record Checks

Blueline Taxis also wholeheartedly supports the proposed change that would require drivers to either submit to an annual criminal record check or to subscribe to the update service.

Although the cost of an Enhanced DBS check has reduced from £44 to £40 since this proposal was presented to the meeting of Licensing Committee on 11 September 2019, it is still cheaper to subscribe to the update service at £13 per annum than it would be to submit to an Enhanced DBS check at even £40 every 3 years.

However, of greater significance than the direct financial saving to drivers is the saving in time (and indirect costs) for drivers and the Council in processing criminal record checks.

Additionally, subscription to the update service also enables the Council to periodically check, whether that be annually or more frequently, that there has been no change to a driver's DBS information, which will undoubtedly enhance public safety by helping to identify any driver who may no longer be a fit and proper person to be so licensed.

Vehicle Age Restrictions

Blueline Taxis welcomes any suggestion that there should be a harmonisation of licensing standards across the region (and hopes that parliament might yet introduce national standards for private hire licensing and national minimum standards for hackney carriage licensing).

The need to address air pollution is not just an issue to be addressed by the Council or the councils of the region, but one that needs to be addressed by parliament by way of national standards / national minimum standards as part of a global response to this environmental challenge.

In the circumstances, Blueline Taxis recognises the need to set a standard for vehicles based on their official emission levels, but questions whether there is really any legitimate justification to also prescribe age limits.

Can it really be said that a 4 years old vehicle is not suitable to be granted its first licence when, if it had been licensed when less than 4 years old, it could then have remain licensed until 8 years old, as the Council proposes?

If there is evidence to justify the imposition of age limits, as opposed to solely an emission level, the Council has failed to allude to its existence, let alone to present that evidence to the Licensing Committee or to disclose it to stakeholders.

Blueline Taxis acknowledges that older vehicles may be less well maintained and / or fail emission tests, but that is certainly not always the case and there are older vehicles that are exceptionally well maintained, as the Council has long acknowledged through its policy to license such vehicles beyond the current terminal age limit.

Although opposed to the imposition of an age limit for the granting of a first licence, Blueline Taxis would suggest that this ought to be at least 5 years and possibly 6 or 7 years of age from the date of first registration.

By way of example, I should say that I bought my current car, a Volvo estate, when it was approaching 6 years old and had a recorded mileage of less than 10,000 miles with a full service history with the supplying dealer. Why should anyone have been prevented from licensing that vehicle on the basis of its age alone?

Similarly, why should there be a terminal age when a vehicle must cease to be licensed? Like the public at large, the trade dispose of vehicles when they are no longer fit for purpose or can only be maintained to the required standard at prohibitively high cost.

Would it not be better for the environment for vehicles to be used for as long as possible? If vehicles are forced out of public service as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles at a particular age, they are still likely to be scrapped because they have been used as taxis, even if they are still well maintained.

That having been said, if a vehicle repeatedly fails tests when it is only 6 years of age, Blueline Taxis submits that the Council should refuse to license that vehicle, even though it is of an age the Council would propose to licence.

If a vehicle meets the Council's requirements and is roadworthy in every regard, it is submitted that the Council should licence it, irrespective of its age as it is the level of emissions that should be the determining feature as to whether a vehicle is suitable to be licensed.

Should the Council resolve to impose an age limit, despite the absence of material evidence to base any such decision on, Blueline Taxis would ask the Council to set the terminal age at 10 years, but to also expressly retain its exceptional condition policy to allow for vehicles to be licensed up to 12 years of age.

The Council will, in any event, appreciate that, if it were to withdraw its exceptional condition policy, it would still be obliged to consider any application that was made to depart from policy, but would not, in those circumstances, have the benefit of having a policy to guide it in its determination of such applications, which might well result in appeals to the courts.

The following relate to other matters, which may or may not relate to proposed changes to policy, but which my client considers requires further consideration by the Council. For ease of reference, I shall refer to the paragraph number of the policy.

- 2.5 By arbitrarily restricting the granting of a driver's licence to a person aged at least 21, the Council is discriminating against persons by reason of their age, a protected characteristic. Save for providing that an applicant must have held an ordinary driver's licence for at least 12 months before they can apply for a taxi driver's licence, there is no statutory age limit for the granting of a taxi driver's licence.
- 2.6 The policy states that if documentation produced in support of an application does not satisfy the Council's requirements, the application "will be deemed to be incomplete." Whilst the policy does not seem to explain what the consequence is of any application being deemed to be incomplete, it is assumed the Council meant to state that an application would be refused, if an applicant did not satisfy the Council that they were, in every regard, a fit and proper person.
- 2.7 In addition to full driving licences of the EU and Northern Ireland being recognised by the Council, the law recognises other driving licences, such as those issued by the USA, Canada, Australia, etc. If it would assist, I would be pleased to provide the Council with the relevant statutory provisions and a list of all countries' whose driving licences are recognised as being equivalent to the UK driving licence.
- 2.12 & 2.13 These paragraphs appear to be contradictory and need to be updated to accurately reflect whatever the Council's position may be in relation to EU and other non-UK driving licences.
- 2.32 Subparagraphs (ii) and (iii) appear to be saying the same, albeit not the same level of detail.
- 3.55 - 3.57 The provisions relating to tinted glass are not clearly expressed and requires careful re-wording.
- 4.10 It is now illegal for an employer or the Council to request sight of a police subject access request or to have sight of such a document. Requests for live criminal conviction data may now only be made by way of an application to the DBS for a Basic Disclosure certificate.
- 4.24 As a result of the decision of the High Court in *R (on the application of Dean) v Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy & Ors* [2017] EWHC 1998 (Admin) at paragraph 138, the details / conditions of a licence may be varied by agreement unless there is an express statutory provision prohibiting any such variation. In the circumstances, the Council is asked to acknowledge that, by way of example, the address of the premises to which a private hire operator's licence applies may be changed by agreement.

If my client or I can assist by clarifying or expanding upon anything herein, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please kindly acknowledge safe receipt of this letter and confirm that same will be included with the report to be presented to the Licensing Committee when it gives further consideration to the review of policy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David B. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

David B Wilson

Licensing Consultant

Consulting Editor, Paterson's Licensing Acts 2015-20

Contributing Author, LexisPSL

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Rachael Readman
Trading Standards & Licensing Manager
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

1 September 2025

Dear Ms Readman,

Hackney Carriage Colour Policy

As you may be aware or recall, in 2019 we asked the Council to consider changing its hackney carriage colour policy from yellow to a different colour and one that was widely available as a standard colour from most, if not all, vehicle manufacturers. Despite initial trade support, following public consultation and a change of trade attitude, the Licensing Committee resolved to retain the policy requirement for hackney carriages to be yellow.

According to the official Department for Transport Taxi & PHV Statistics for 2013 (the oldest data available), 2019 (the position when we last made a request) and 2024 (the most recent data available), the Council licensed 164 hackney carriages in 2013, 132 in 2019, and only 119 in 2024, a reduction in numbers of 28%.

The demand for and use of hackney carriages is in decline all over the country because of the customer convenience of using a smartphone app to book a taxi, usually a private hire vehicle, which comes to their location, avoiding the need to walk to a taxi rank and to queue in the rain for a hackney carriage. The global ride-hailing apps did not introduce smartphone apps to the UK taxi industry, but they did a great job at educating the public as to their use and convenience, transforming the taxi industry.

The decline in the hackney carriage trade is, despite its long and distinguished history, only going to continue, becoming less and less economically viable for owners and drivers.

While the Council's intention to create a distinctive fleet using a non-standard colour like yellow is understood, the reality is that wrapping or spraying vehicles to an acceptable industry standard now costs over £2,000 - on top of the vehicle price.

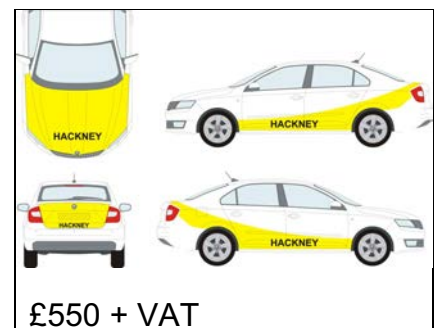
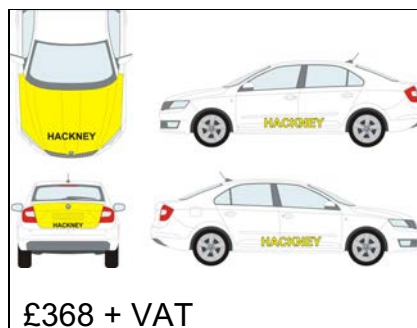
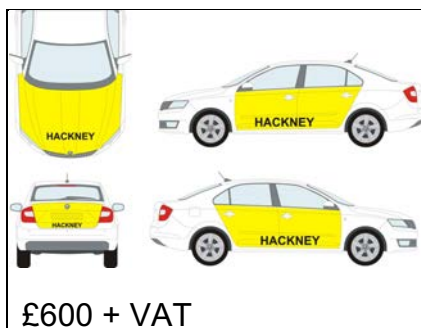
Due to the age policy, many owner-drivers cut corners with cheap spray jobs that leave door checks, pillars, and other areas unsprayed, which the Council allows, even though this is a breach of the policy requirements.

These poor finishes quickly fade, and the use of low-grade paint further devalues the vehicles - making them nearly worthless at trade-in.

The financial burden is unsustainable, especially with falling trade. We urge the Council to allow the use of a standard, off-the-shelf colour - chosen by the Council - that avoids these unnecessary costs.

At Blueline, we are ready to invest in newer vehicles (in particular, we are looking to introduce Tesla electric vehicles to our Hartlepool hackney carriage fleet, but such vehicles are only available in red, blue, black, white and grey), but only if this unnecessary financial barrier is removed. With top signs, plates, and other hackney markings in place, public confusion is not, and would not be, a concern.

We have taken the liberty of asking a local sign and graphics company to produce some images of partially wrapped or liveried vehicles, retaining the distinctive yellow colour already associated with Hartlepool hackney carriages to show that a distinctive look could be achieved at a much lower cost – the prices stated are for supply and fitting.



We do not specifically advocate for any of these designs, which are intended only to show that vehicles could be made to be highly distinctive for much less than a professional re-spray. We appreciate the Council might want to consider other design options and we would encourage the Council to do so.

We respectfully ask the Council to review the current hackney carriage colour policy and the impact of this policy on the dwindling hackney carriage trade. Supporting a more practical and cost effective colour / livery choice will help to preserve the remaining hackney carriage trade for the public.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Shanks
Managing Director, Blueline Group
for on behalf of
Taxi Cab Services (Hartlepool) Ltd