

# LICENSING COMMITTEE

## AGENDA



**Friday 28 March 2025**

**at 10.00 am**

**in Committee Room B,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

**MEMBERS: LICENSING COMMITTEE:**

Councillors Allen, Bailey-Fleet, Clayton, Darby, Dodds, Dunbar, Feeney, Jorgeson, Little, Nelson, Thompson and Young.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

**3. MINUTES**

- 3.1 To approve the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 13 December 2024
- 3.2 To receive the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 21 January 2025
- 3.3 To receive the minutes of the Regulatory Sub Committee held on 22 November 2024

**4. ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

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

**5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

No items.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

**CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE**

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

# **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

13 December 2024

The meeting commenced at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Martin Dunbar (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Ben Clayton, Tom Feeney, Sue Little, John Nelson and Carole Thompson.

Officers: Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)  
Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager  
Neil Wilson, Assistant Chief Solicitor  
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

### **7. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Quewone Bailey-Fleet, Rob Darby, Matthew Dodds, Michael Jorgeson and Mike Young.

### **8. Declarations of interest by Members**

None

### **9. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2024**

Minutes approved

### **10. Receipt of the minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committees held on 3 June 2024, 12 August 2024, 27 September 2024 and 8 October 2024**

Minutes received

### **11. Receipt of the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Sub-Committee held on 17 October 2024**

Minutes received

## **12. Any Other Items which the Chairman considers are urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

## **13. Receipt of the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Sub-Committee held on 5 December 2024**

A member queried the regulation checks and processes relating to Uber drivers. The Assistant Director advised that full checks were conducted by the responsible licensing authority but Hartlepool has cross border authorisation. Members were asked to notify the licensing department of any potential enforcement issues.

Minutes received

## **14. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy – Euro 6 and Age Policy Requirements** *(Assistant Director (Regulatory Services))*

The current private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy requires that all vehicles be Euro 6 compliant by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and that a first time licence only be granted to a vehicle under 5 years old from the date of first registration. A petition had recently been submitted requesting that the policy be amended to delay the Euro 6 requirement and remove the age restrictions. Officers confirmed that drivers had been advised of the policy changes in 2019 when Licensing Committee had approved the amendments and the majority of licensed vehicles had been upgraded. They felt it was unfair on those owners who had already upgraded their vehicles to delay the requirement and would give an unfair commercial advantage to those that had not.

Neil Handisides referred to national best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England regards taxi and private hire vehicle licensing which states that licensing authorities should not impose age limits but should instead consider more targeted requirements to meet the policy on Euro 6. He noted that Newcastle was allowing Licensed vehicles to be Euro 5 until November 2028. The Trading Standards and Licensing Manager referred to Appendix 5 of the papers which gave a full breakdown of neighbouring local authority policies, some of which had deleted the age restrictions.

Khalid Hussain referred to the variations in policy across the country, indicating that the majority of Councils were removing the age restrictions while retaining the Euro 6 requirement albeit at a later date. If this was moved to 2027-28 most Euro 5 cars would have been replaced in any case. Mr Hussain owned 11 taxis, 8 of which are not Euro 6 compliant. A member queried why he had not adapted all his vehicles previously. Mr Hussain advised that the covid pandemic had impacted the trade economically with a number of job losses. It would cost him around £80 thousand to adapt all his remaining Euro 5 cars. A member acknowledged he had adapted some of his vehicles and queried how quickly he could adapt the rest. Mr Hussain considered 2026-2028 as being a reasonable timeframe. He noted that other local authorities were giving financial assistance to drivers to pay the costs of adaptation to Euro 6 and highlighted that a number of Council-run vehicles were not Euro 6 compliant.

Members discussed the issues raised by those present. They queried the requirement for an age limit providing a vehicle was Euro 6 compliant, felt that emissions should be the priority rather than the age of the vehicle and proposed that there should be no limit of any vehicle that was Euro 6 compliant. There was no dissension to this. Officers asked that they be given time to look at the policy and ensure all requirements would be met should this amendment be made rather than it be approved here and now. Members unanimously approved this course of action. The Assistant Director advised those present that this was only an extension to the Euro 6 requirement and that drivers who had not yet amended their vehicles should look to do so as soon as possible.

### **Decision**

- I. That a revised Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy be brought to the next Licensing Committee meeting based on the potential removal of age limits for licensed vehicles.
- II. That the requirement for licensed vehicles to be Euro 6 compliant be extended to June 2025.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am.

CHAIR

## **LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

The meeting commenced at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

**Present:**

Councillor: Martin Dunbar (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Darby and Michael Jorgeson

Officers: Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager  
Neil Wilson, Assistant Chief Solicitor  
Gemma Redfern, Solicitor  
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

Also present PC Clare Lawton, Cleveland Police

#### **26. Apologies for Absence**

None

#### **27. Declarations of interest by Members**

None

#### **28. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2024**

Minutes confirmed

#### **29. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024**

Minutes 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 – Personal Licence application MS – 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. Personal Licence application MS:** (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 10:20am

CHAIR

## **REGULATORY SUB COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

22 November 2024

The meeting commenced at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Tom Feeney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Sue Little and Carole Thompson

Officers: Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager  
Neil Wilson, Assistant Chief Solicitor  
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

#### **14. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Mike Young

#### **15. Declarations of interest by Members**

None

#### **16. 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 17 – Private Hire Driver Licence MS – 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 18 – Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver Licence TB – 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).

- 17. Private Hire Driver Licence MS** (*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 consider what action should be taken against a licensed Private Hire driver. Further details in the closed minutes.

**Decision**

Detailed in the closed minutes

- 18. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver Licence TB** (*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 consider what action should be taken against a licensed dual badge driver. Further details in the closed minutes.

**Decision**

Detailed in the closed minutes.

The meeting concluded at 10.20am

CHAIR



# LICENSING COMMITTEE

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)

**Subject:** PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE  
LICENSING POLICY

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## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people will be safe and protected from harm.
- that is connected, sustainable, clean and green.
- that has an inclusive and growing economy.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek approval of the draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy.
- 2.2 To seek approval for the commencement of a consultation exercise relating to the draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy.

## 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 petition was brought to the Licensing team on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 requesting an amendment to our current Policy in regards to our requirements

for vehicles to be Euro 6 compliant by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The petition was discussed at Licensing Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and it was decided that a review of the Policy would take place to incorporate the necessary amendments to allow the implementation of the Euro 6 requirements.

- 3.4 The proposed changes to the Policy were discussed with licensees at the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Annual General Meeting in February 2025. The Council will formally consult with the following organisations if approved by members:

- Licensees
- Cleveland Police
- Planning Authority
- Adults and Children's Safeguarding Board
- Disability Groups
- School Transport
- Service Users
- Tees Valley Licensing Group
- North East Strategic Licensing Group

- 3.4 A copy of the Draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy can be found at **Appendix 1**.

- 3.5 The key changes to the policy are:

- All vehicle age requirements have been removed. Following recommendation by Licensing Committee members on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025, this aligns our policy with The Government Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for Licensing Authorities.
- All vehicles licensed must be Euro 6 compliant by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 (Wheelchair accessible vehicles must be Euro 6 compliant by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026). A six month postponement to the requirements outlined in the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage 2022 Policy was agreed by members at Licensing Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- Insurance Write Off's updated to reflect the S and N categories replacing the old C and D categories. Both Category S and N cars can be repaired and put back on the road, but the two are defined as follows: A Category S vehicle suffered structural damage, and has been written off by the insurer as it was uneconomical to repair. This damage could be to any part of the vehicle's structural frame, including the chassis. A Category S vehicle will not be licensed by the authority.

A Category N vehicle has also been written off by the insurer as it was uneconomical to repair, but the difference is that it suffered non-structural damage. The vehicle's structural frame or chassis did not suffer any damage. Category N may be considered as a licensed vehicle, subject to a satisfactory independent engineers report and independent mechanical examination.

- On application new drivers must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of a driving assessment, approved by Hartlepool Borough Council. The current 2022 policy allows new drivers to undertake this assessment within their first twelve months of being a licensed driver. Unfortunately, under this current regime we have experienced a number of failures due to safety and speeding. This amendment will not affect current drivers who are within their first year of driving and will bring us line with the other Tees Valley Authorities.

- 3.6 Hartlepool Borough Council currently licences 225 Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles of which 32 are not Euro 6 compliant. (Figures correct as of 12/03/25)

#### 4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Hartlepool Borough Council will use its role as licensing authority to protect the public. This will be achieved by, amongst other things:

*Maintaining public confidence in the hackney carriage and private hire trade so that it remains, safe, reliable and sustainable transport option for the travelling public.*

- 4.2 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are an essential form of transport in the Hartlepool area. Many people depend on such vehicles for trips that buses or other forms of public transport are incapable of making. It is for this reason that we do not want our fleet numbers to reduce. It is, however, clearly important that emissions from hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are reduced as far as possible.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/ IMPLICATIONS

<b>Risk Implications</b>	None
<b>Financial Considerations</b>	Yes – Some vehicle owners will need to update their vehicles. Some vehicle owners may decide not to upgrade their vehicles and cease working within the PH/ HC trade.
<b>Legal Considerations</b>	None
<b>Equality and Diversity Considerations</b>	None
<b>Staff Considerations</b>	None
<b>Asset Management Considerations</b>	None
<b>Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations</b>	Yes – Environmental Implications.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That Members note the contents of this report and approve the Draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy as detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 6.2 That members approve the commencement of consultation on the Draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Hartlepool Borough Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy is formally approved by the Licensing Committee, it is imperative that this Policy remains relevant and progressive to encourage the trade to be environmentally mindful with their vehicle choices.
- 7.2 It is entirely appropriate and reasonable for a Licensing Authority to require and expect licensed vehicles that will be used to transport the general public to be of a high standard.
- 7.3 The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy is a considered document, this is reflected in the previous alterations that have assisted vehicle owners and allowed time for them to make the necessary adjustments.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles Standards  
[Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards)

- 8.2 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>

- 8.3 Hartlepool Borough Council Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy (7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

[https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/info/20023/licences\\_and\\_permits/284/taxis](https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/info/20023/licences_and_permits/284/taxis)

## 9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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# **PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENSING POLICY**

**APPROVED BY HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Date TBC**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles play an important role in the provision of local public transport in Hartlepool.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Local Authority when licensing hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators is to protect the public. As licensing authority, Hartlepool Borough Council ("The Council") believes that the public should have reasonable access to safe and comfortable hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

### **Licensing Objectives**

- 1.3 **Hartlepool Borough Council will use its role as licensing authority to protect the public. This will be achieved by, amongst other things:**
  - i) **Administering the licensing process in a fair and reasonable way;**
  - ii) **Taking proportionate enforcement action where it is necessary and appropriate to do so;**
  - iii) **Maintaining public confidence in the hackney carriage and private hire trade so that it remains as a safe, reliable and sustainable transport option for the travelling public.**
- 1.4 A hackney carriage is a public transport vehicle with no more than 8 passenger seats, which is licensed to "ply for hire". This means that it may wait at designated taxi stands or be hailed in the street, in the Borough of Hartlepool, by members of the public in addition to being pre-booked.
- 1.5 Private hire vehicles must also have no more than 8 passenger seats but they must be booked in advance through a private hire operator and may not "ply for hire" in the street.

### **Powers and Duties**

- 1.6 The Council has adopted Part 2 of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. This legislation, together with the provisions of The Town Police Clauses Act 1847, places on the Council the powers and duties to carry out licensing functions in respect of hackney carriage and private hire licensing. As such the Council is responsible for the licensing of private hire drivers, vehicles and operators and hackney carriage drivers and vehicles. This document sets out the policy that the Council will apply when making decisions about new applications and licences currently in force.



1.7 This Policy shall apply in respect of applications, renewals, transfers and any other related matters connected to the following licences:

- Hackney carriage driver
- Hackney carriage vehicle
- Private hire driver
- Private hire vehicle
- Private hire operator

### **Licensing Methods**

1.8 The methods the Council shall use are as follows:

- i) Setting the standards for the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators.
- ii) Annual licensing and routine inspection of vehicles, with appropriate follow up action.
- iii) Routine inspection of insurance policies and Certificates of Compliance / MOT certificates, with appropriate follow up action.
- iv) Checks of driver's medical health, criminal record, driving ability and knowledge of the Borough.
- v) Investigation of complaints with appropriate follow up action.
- vi) Liaison with the Police and other agencies regarding issues of mutual concern in relation to offences or the conduct of licensees.
- vii) Liaison with the hackney carriage and private hire trade by way of open meetings.
- viii) Taking enforcement and/or disciplinary action including the issue of prosecution proceedings, verbal and written warnings, simple cautions, suspension or revocation of licences for breaches of legislation, conditions or this policy.
- ix) Conditions added to licences.
- x) The issue of guidance notes.

1.9 When formulating and applying this Policy, the Council will take into consideration the Regulator's Code, the Code for Crown Prosecutors, and any appropriate best practice guidance including the DFT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles Standards (published July 2020).

### **Status**

1.10 In exercising its discretion in carrying out its regulatory functions, the Council will have regard to this Policy and the objectives set out above.

1.11 Notwithstanding the existence of this Policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits. Where the Council considers it necessary or appropriate to deviate from the Policy, clear and compelling reasons will be given for doing so.

## **Implementation and Review**

- 1.12 This Policy will take effect from **TBC**. From this date, this Policy will override and supersede all existing policies in relation to the licensing of private hire vehicles and hackney carriages, their drivers and operators.
- 1.13 The Council will keep this Policy under review and will consult where appropriate on proposed revisions.
- 1.14 When this Policy is implemented, the Council will require licence holders to comply with its terms immediately or, where appropriate, from the renewal of a current licence. Where it is not possible to comply with part of the Policy due to an outstanding action required by the Council information will be provided as to an implementation date for that part.
- 1.15 Vehicles licensed under any previous licensing policy may have their licences renewed without having to comply with any new requirements imposed by this policy where to do so would be uneconomic or impractical.
- 1.16 After the introduction of this Policy, the Council may make decisions which change it. The changes may either have immediate effect or come into effect on a given date. This Policy document will be regularly updated to reflect these changes. Amended copies of the Policy will be available from the Licensing Office and via the internet.

## **Consultation**

- 1.17 In preparing this Policy, the Council has consulted with:  
  
Licensees; Cleveland Police; Planning authority; Adult and Children's Safeguarding Board; Disability Groups; School Transport; Service Users; Tees Valley Licensing Group; North East Strategic Licensing Group and any other parties/organisations considered necessary.

## **Partnership Working**

- 1.18 The Council will work in partnership with the following agencies and individuals to promote the policy objectives:  
  
Local hackney carriage and private hire trade; Cleveland Police; Local Transport Authorities; Planning authority; Local residents; Disability groups; Service Users; Tees Valley Licensing Group; North East Strategic Licensing Group and other Council departments.

## **Related Policies and Strategies**

- 1.19 This policy will be integrated with local planning, transport, tourism, equality and cultural strategies, and other plans introduced for the management of the Borough and night-time economy.

## **Equality**

- 1.20 The Council is committed to ensuring equality in employment and service delivery. To achieve the above standard the Council is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **Duties and Obligations under the Equality Act 2010**

- 1.21 The Equality Act 2010 consolidates the legislation previously set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to increase access to transport services and infrastructure by disabled people. Those who provide transport services by way of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles are advised to contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission for further information and advice on avoiding discrimination.
- 1.22 It is a requirement of a vehicle licence that wheelchair accessible vehicles have the appropriate equipment so as to transport passengers in wheelchairs safely and in reasonable comfort at all times. **Any vehicle proprietor found in breach of this may face formal action which could include suspension or revocation of the licence.**
- 1.23 Licensed drivers are under a duty to carry guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs in their vehicles without any additional charge. Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply for an exemption from the duty on medical grounds. A medical certificate must be provided, at the driver's expense, from the driver's own GP stating the details of their medical condition. A register will be kept of those drivers exempted. **Persons who breach duties may be guilty of a criminal offence and, in addition to any criminal sanction, would be liable to disciplinary procedures which may include licence suspension or revocation.**
- 1.24 Further information is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission at [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## **Duties and Obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998**

- 1.25 Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention of Human Rights confers on Individuals (and companies) the Right to Peaceful Enjoyment of their possessions and the Protection of Property. Once granted, a Licence is a

possession and no one can be deprived of his property or have controls put on his property except where the action is permitted by law and justifiable in the public or general interest.

- 1.26 When considering matters relating to the grant, revocation, renewal or refusal of licences and the placing of conditions on licences, the Council must consider whether the decision affects an individual, group or company's Human Rights as set out in the Convention and if it does, whether the interference with those rights is permissible by reason of the justifications set out in the Convention. In addition, consideration must be given to whether the interference is proportionate.

### **Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17**

- 1.27 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, places a duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

## **DRIVER LICENCES**

### **Essential Requirements**

- 2.1 The Council issues licences to drive private hire vehicles, hackney carriages or both.
- 2.2 The statutory and practical criteria and qualifications for each licence are broadly identical and therefore the following requirements will apply to all driver licences. However, where differences exist between the licensing regimes reference will be made to it in this policy.
- 2.3 Prior to a driver's licence being issued to new applicants, the applicant shall:
- i) Complete and submit to the Council an application on the prescribed form.
  - ii) Pay the required licence and associated fees. If payment is made by cheque which is subsequently dishonoured any licence issued shall be null and void. Any refund or part refund of a licence fee will be calculated in accordance with the Council's published list of fees and charges.
  - iii) Demonstrate compliance with the eligibility criteria detailed below.
- 2.4 Prior to a driver's licence being renewed, the applicant shall:
- i) Complete and submit to the Council an application on the prescribed form no later than 14 days prior to the expiry of the current licence.
  - ii) Pay the required licence and associated fees. If payment is made by cheque which is subsequently dishonoured any licence issued shall be null and void.
  - iii) Demonstrate, if required, continued compliance with the eligibility criteria detailed below.

### **Proof of eligibility**

- 2.5 Applicants must satisfy the following criteria:
- i) Hold appropriate driving licence.
  - ii) Have at least 12 months driving experience since full driving licence was granted.
  - iii) **New drivers must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of a driving assessment, approved by Hartlepool Borough Council. Guidance on booking an appropriate assessment is included on the council's website.**
  - iv) Provide evidence of having a right to work in the UK.
  - v) Successfully complete the 'knowledge test'.
  - vi) Provide satisfactory evidence that the applicant meets the "Group 2" medical standard.
  - vii) Provide satisfactory evidence of completion of approved training in issues surrounding the awareness of child and adult safeguarding issues.

- viii) Have an ability to speak, read and understand English to a reasonable standard.
- ix) Produce an appropriate enhanced criminal records check that is no more than 30 days old. This is required for every new applicant and every six months once a licence has been granted. A licence will not be renewed if an enhanced criminal records check, that is less than 30 days old, is not made available or obtainable by a licensing officer.

In order to facilitate this, the Council requires all drivers to enrol on the DBS Update Service.

If the Council is not provided with an enhanced criminal records check, or is not able to view a driver's records via the DBS Update Service, because, for example, the driver is not enrolled on the Service, the driver's licence will be suspended until such time as the criminal record can be viewed.

- 2.6 At all times, the Council's legitimate aim is to protect members of the public who are using vehicles and drivers licensed by the Council. Anyone wishing to be licensed must produce to the Council all of the documentation described in this policy.

### **Driving Experience**

- 2.7 An applicant for the grant of a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence must have held a full DVLA driving licence for a period of at least 12 months before an application for the grant of a driver's licence will be accepted. Full driving licences issued by other lawfully recognised countries will also count towards this qualification requirement.
- 2.8 **New drivers must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of a driving assessment, approved by Hartlepool Borough Council. Guidance on booking an appropriate assessment is included on the council's website.**
- 2.9 **Where there are specific concerns about the driving ability of a driver, for example through passenger complaints, the licensing authority may consider whether the driver in question should undertake a further assessment to address those concerns.**

### **DVLA Driving Licences**

- 2.10 In order to be satisfied that an applicant has a current DVLA driving licence and also to be aware of any penalty points on the licence, the Council will require access to the DVLA on-line licence checking system.

- 2.11 The DVLA requires the holder of the licence to give permission for access to driver records by providing the Council with a unique access code provided by the DVLA. Therefore, all drivers wishing to be licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire driver must either provide written consent or present to the Council an acceptable unique access code to allow their DVLA driving licence to be checked prior to a licence being approved.
- 2.12 A driver with 9 penalty points or more on their driver's licence will be referred to the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee for consideration as to whether they are, or remain, a safe and suitable person to hold a licence.

### **Right to Work**

- 2.13 The prevention of illegal migrant working in the UK is governed by legislation that may change from time to time. The Council will undertake the necessary checks required to comply with such legislation.
- 2.14 All applicants for a private hire operator and/or a private hire and hackney carriage driver licence will be required to prove that they have a right to work in the UK before being considered for a licence. In doing so, the Council may seek information regarding the immigration status of an individual from the relevant Agency.
- 2.15 For British applicants without a current British passport, a birth certificate which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents and proof of National Insurance number is required.
- 2.16 Applicants from Switzerland or one of the EEA countries who have registered under the EU Settlement Scheme have the right to work in the UK providing they can provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.
- 2.17 All other applicants who are non-EU nationals will have to provide proof of a right to work in the UK, a residence card and a passport before any application can be accepted.
- 2.18 Regardless of their country of origin, a driver's licence will not be granted until an applicant is able to prove they have a right to work in the UK. Depending on the applicant's status, checks may be made at each renewal process. All documentation will be copied and kept on the applicant's personal file. The responsibility to prove a right to work lies entirely with the applicant.
- 2.19 Licences may be time limited to coincide with an applicant's limited right to work in the UK.

### **Language Proficiency**

- 2.20 All applicants must have the ability to speak, read and understand English to a reasonable standard.
- 2.21 Written English ability will be determined through the knowledge test and the driving assessment. Spoken English and the ability to understand English will be determined by Licensing Officers during the entirety of the licensing application process.
- 2.22 If there is any doubt as to an applicant's ability to communicate in English (spoken or written), they shall be required to undertake and pass a Council approved English assessment and any costs associated with such assessment shall be the applicant's responsibility.

### **Applicants Who Have Spent Time Abroad**

- 2.23 If an applicant is newly resident in the UK, they must still apply for an Enhanced DBS check regardless of the period of time they have spent in the UK.
- 2.24 Where an applicant has spent 3 months or more living abroad or has not lived in the UK for a continuous six-year period at the time of the application, an Enhanced DBS disclosure in itself will usually be insufficient to satisfy the Council that the applicant is a fit and proper person. This is because the DBS does not routinely provide criminal record information from non-UK countries. These applicants will be required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct or an equivalent document, translated into English by a recognised, impartial body, from each country where they have been living. Any costs incurred must be met by the applicant.
- 2.25 A Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent document is an extract from the judicial record or administrative authority in the relevant country testifying to good conduct and/or to any criminal convictions recorded against the individual. The Council will take advice from the DBS in identifying the appropriate authority where available.
- 2.26 The Council may approach the relevant Embassy or appropriate body directly to verify documents provided. Any costs involved must be met by the applicant.
- 2.27 The applicant is advised that the Council may require the submission of additional information with the application e.g. verifiable references from former employers and persons in positions of trust, which may demonstrate that they are a fit and proper person.



- 2.28 Existing licensed drivers must notify the Council in writing when they intend to leave the country for an extended period of 3 months or more. They must also notify the Council on their return and complete a statutory declaration on the form provided by the Council.
- 2.29 Information concerning Certificates of Good Conduct can be obtained by contacting the Council's Licensing Team.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Criminal Records**

- 2.30 The DBS is responsible for:
- i) Processing requests for criminal records checks.
  - ii) Deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list.
- 2.31 The DBS helps employers and others make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
- 2.32 Before a licence application can be considered, the Council requires sight of an applicant's non-protected criminal, motoring and licensing convictions including fixed penalties, cautions, reprimands and warnings.
- 2.33 This must be in the form of an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure issued by the DBS that includes reference to both the Adult & Child Barred Lists.
- 2.34 Where appropriate, applicants for the renewal of a driver's licence must provide the Council with the means necessary to access their DBS Update Service record.
- 2.35 An application for a driver's licence must be completed within 6 months of the issue date of the DBS certificate. If the DBS certificate is more than 6 months old the applicant will be required to obtain a new one, or provide a means of access to a new one, before the application can be completed unless the applicant is registered through the DBS Update Service.
- 2.36 DBS checks are generally not portable and only DBS checks applied for through Hartlepool Council's Licensing Team will be accepted unless an applicant is appropriately registered with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Update Service.

### **Relevance of Convictions, Cautions and Conduct**

- 2.37 In assessing whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence, the Council will consider each case on its own merits and will have

regard to its adopted guidelines on the relevance of convictions which is available on request.

- 2.38 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to applicants for hackney carriage or private hire driver licences by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exception) Order 1977 and therefore applicants are required to disclose all non-protected convictions, including those that would normally be regarded as spent. Guidance on 'protected convictions' can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>.

### **Driver Knowledge/Locality Test**

- 2.39 In order to determine the fitness of a person to hold a licence, all applicants are required to sit and pass a test on their knowledge of, amongst others things, licensing legislation, the local geography, driver conduct/conditions, Highway Code and awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation/Safeguarding. Tests for hackney carriage drivers include the location of hackney carriage stands and knowledge of tariffs and charges. A driver's licence will not be issued without the applicant first passing the knowledge test.
- 2.40 The cost of one knowledge test is currently included in the licence fee. If an applicant fails to pass the test, a further fee will be charged for every subsequent test. Applicants are not permitted to sit a re-test without payment of the fee.
- 2.41 Should an applicant fail to pass the knowledge test within five attempts, they will be required to wait for a period of at least six months before a further test may be re-booked. This should provide the applicant with sufficient time to develop the necessary knowledge required in order to successfully undertake the knowledge test.
- 2.42 If an applicant fails to attend a test or attends late, a further test shall be required for which an additional charge will be made.

### **Medical Assessment**

- 2.43 In order to be satisfied as to an applicant's medical fitness, the applicant must provide to the Council a medical examination report, in a Council approved format, that is signed by a registered medical practitioner, and which states that the individual satisfies the Group 2 medical standard.
- 2.44 This is a higher medical standard than that required for drivers of other motor vehicles and is required due to the length of time the driver may spend at the wheel and the responsibility they have for the safety of their passengers and the public. In addition, drivers may have to assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

- 2.45 The medical practitioner must confirm that:
- i) They have examined the applicant;
  - ii) The applicant is registered with the practice; and/or
  - iii) They have had full and complete access to the applicant's full GP medical records;
  - iv) The medical examination was carried out to the Group II standard;
  - v) They consider the applicant to be fit to act as the driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle in accordance with this standard.
- 2.46 If the Council is not satisfied as to the medical fitness of an applicant, a driver's licence will not be granted.
- 2.47 If the Council is not satisfied as to the medical fitness of a licensed driver there will be reasonable cause to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew the licence under s.61 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.48 The applicant is responsible for paying the fee for the examination. The medical certificate will be valid for a period of 6 months after which, if the driver's licence has not been issued, either a new medical certificate or a letter from the GP who carried out the original assessment confirming that there has been no change in the medical fitness of the applicant will be required. Once the medical is 12 months old a letter will not be accepted and a new medical will be required.
- 2.49 Once a licence holder reaches the age of 45, they must provide a new medical certificate every five years and once they reach the age of 65 years a medical certificate will be required every year.
- 2.50 For drivers who have chosen a three-year licence, they must provide a medical certificate on the same basis as that detailed above and, where this falls mid-licence, the driver must provide a new medical certificate on their 45<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> birthday and every year thereafter.
- 2.51 If a driver has a medical condition that requires notification to the DVLA e.g. sleep apnoea they **must** also notify the Council in writing at the same time that DVLA is notified.
- 2.52 In addition to the above requirements where a driver suffers from a condition that requires monitoring but would not prevent him/her from driving (s)he is required to provide written confirmation from his GP or consultant, as recommended by the DVLA standards, each year that s/he remains fit to carry out the duties of a driver and/or may be required to submit an annual medical.
- 2.53 If the Council has reason to suspect that a licensed driver may not be fit to continue to drive a licensed vehicle, the driver must undertake any

reasonable test or medical examination as is required, within a reasonable time, as directed by the Council.

### **Term of Licence**

- 2.54 All driver licences will be valid for a maximum period of up to 3 years or such lesser period as the Council thinks appropriate.

### **Suspension of Licence**

- 2.55 If it considers it necessary and appropriate to do so, the Council may choose to suspend a driver's licence. Suspensions can be immediate if they are considered necessary on the grounds of public safety.
- 2.56 The Council's policy on the use of suspensions is attached as Appendix I.

### **Refusals and Revocations**

- 2.57 Hartlepool Borough Council provides information to the National Register of Taxi Licence Refusals and Revocations (NR3), a mechanism for licensing authorities to share details of individuals who have had a hackney carriage or Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) driver's licence revoked, or an application for one refused. This is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council – that is, assessing whether an individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage or PHV licence.
- 2.58 Where a hackney carriage/ PHV driver's licence is revoked, or an application for one refused, the authority will automatically record this decision on NR3.
- 2.59 All applications for a new driver's licence or licence renewal will automatically be checked on NR3. If a search of NR3 indicates a match with an applicant, the authority will seek further information about the entry on the register from the authority which recorded it. Any information received as a result of an NR3 search will only be used in respect of the specific licence application and will not be retained beyond the determination of that application.
- 2.60 The information recorded on NR3 itself will be limited to:
- i) Name
  - ii) Date of birth
  - iii) Address and contact details
  - iv) National insurance number

- v) Driving licence number
- vi) Decision taken
- vii) Date of decision
- viii) Date decision effective

- 2.61 Information will be retained on NR3 for a period of 25 years.
- 2.62 This is a mandatory part of applying for/being granted a hackney carriage / PHV driver licence. The authority has a published policy on the approach it will take to requests by other authorities for further information about entries on NR3, and about the use it will make of any further information provided to it. You can read that policy at [https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/info/20023/licences\\_and\\_permits/284/taxis](https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/info/20023/licences_and_permits/284/taxis).
- 2.63 Information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection legislation and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any searches, provision or receipt of information of or under NR3 are necessary to the authority's statutory licensing functions of ensuring that all drivers are fit and proper to hold the applicable licence. It is not intended that any NR3 data will be transferred out of the United Kingdom.
- 2.64 If you wish to raise any issue related to the data protection legislation, including by relying on any of the rights afforded to data subjects under the GDPR, you can do so to the authority's Data Protection Officer at [data.protection@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:data.protection@hartlepool.gov.uk). This includes submitting a subject access request.
- 2.65 You always have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Advice on how to raise a concern about handling of data can be found on the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.

### **Conditions of Licence**

- 2.66 The law does not permit the Council to attach conditions to a hackney carriage driver's licence. However, hackney carriage drivers are subject to Council's byelaws which are freely available from the Council's Licensing Team on request or by visiting the Council's website and they shall be expected to fully comply with this policy's 'Code of Good Conduct'.
- 2.67 The Council's conditions in respect of private hire drivers are detailed at Appendix II.

### **Code of Good Conduct**

- 2.68 The Code of Good Conduct serves to promote the Council's licensing objectives in respect of hackney carriage and private hire licensing. The

Code will be taken into consideration in disciplinary matters. The Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix III to this policy.

### **Driver's Dress Code**

- 2.69 A dress code serves to enhance the professional image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, and promotes the concept that drivers of licensed vehicles are vocational drivers.
- 2.70 In order to raise the profile of the licensed trade, drivers should operate, at all times in a professional manner and conform to a minimum standard of dress. The Council's Dress Code for licensed drivers is contained within Appendix III and may be taken into consideration in disciplinary matters.

## **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

### **Requirements Relating to the Proprietor of a Licensed Vehicle**

- 3.1 All proprietors of a licensed vehicle must provide to the Licensing Team a basic criminal records check at the time of application for a vehicle licence and every twelve months thereafter. The criminal records check must be no more than 30 days when it is provided to the Council. For the proprietor of multiple vehicles, this requirement shall apply to only one vehicle.
- 3.2 The requirement detailed in 3.1 above shall not apply where the proprietor also holds a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle driver's licence issued by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- 3.3 The requirement detailed in 3.1 above shall not apply where the proprietor is also a licensed private hire operator with Hartlepool Borough Council.

### **Essential Requirements and Conditions of Licence**

- 3.4 Prior to being licensed, and in order to remain licensed, all vehicles must meet the following requirements which, when a licence is in force, shall be regarded as conditions of that licence.
- 3.5 The requirements apply to both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles unless otherwise stated.
- 3.6 Prior to a vehicle licence being issued the applicant, being the proprietor of the vehicle, shall complete and submit to the Council an application on the prescribed form together with the required licence fee no later than 14 days prior to the licence being required.
- 3.7 If payment is made by cheque which is subsequently dishonoured any licence issued shall be null and void.

### **Specifications**

- 3.8 The Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance recommends that local licensing authorities should adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicle as possible. They are, however, encouraged to make use of the "type approval" rules within any specifications they determine.
- 3.9 All vehicles, therefore, shall have an appropriate 'type approval' which is either:
  - i) European Whole Vehicle Type Approval
  - ii) British Individual Type Approval

- 3.10 Vehicle type approval is the confirmation that production samples of a design will meet specified technical, safety and performance standards. The specification of the vehicle is recorded and only that specification is approved.
- 3.11 All vehicles subject to new applications for hackney carriage vehicle licences, shall have M1 European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (EWVTA).
- 3.12 Vehicles will, in general, be licensed for the carriage of up to four passengers, but applications in relation to larger vehicles that can accommodate up to eight passengers will be accepted, provided that there is compliance with the specifications applicable to such vehicles.
- 3.13 Vehicles may also be licensed to carry fewer passengers subject to compliance with specifications relating to passenger comfort and vehicle conditions.
- 3.14 Convertible vehicles (i.e. vehicles with a retractable hood) will not be licensed.

### **Essential Criteria**

- 3.15 Before granting a vehicle licence, and throughout the vehicle's time as a licensed vehicle, the vehicle must:
- i) Be suitable in type, size and design for use as a licensed vehicle as defined by this policy.
  - ii) Be in an excellent mechanical condition.
  - iii) Have a comprehensive service history, or a history of mechanical checks and a history of spot checks carried out by licensing officers.
  - iv) Be safe.
  - v) Be comfortable in the opinion of a licensing officer.
  - vi) Comply with all statutory requirements applicable to that vehicle.
  - vii) Display the Council's licence plates, which must be securely attached to the exterior front and rear of the vehicle as prescribed by the Council.
  - viii) Prominently display the Council's internal licence plate on either the dashboard or the top left corner of the windscreen.
  - ix) Permanently attach the appropriate 'decals', issued by the Council, centrally to both front doors of the vehicle.
  - x) Not be fitted with a roof rack.
- 3.16 The vehicle must also satisfy the following internal requirements:
- i) Height (inside) – From the top of any part of the seat cushions to the roof at lowest part must not be less than 810mm and, in every other respect must not be so constructed as to present any risk of injury or discomfort to any



passenger. The definition of roof includes any parcel shelf, entertainment console or other fixing.

- ii) Knee space – The measurement between the rear of the front seats at mid position and the back rest of the back seat must not be less than 760mm.
- iii) Seats (length) – the shortest distance between the front and back of a seat (i.e. from the back rest to the front edge) must not be less than 450mm.
- iv) In the case of rear facing seats, the distance between the backs of facing seats shall not be less than 1520mm. In all other cases the distance between the back rest of the seat and any facing obstruction must not be less than 760mm.
- v) Seats (width) – The shortest distance between the edges of the seats shall be no less than 400mm. Where the rear passenger seating is divided into individual seats by way of formed cushions or other similar divide and, in the opinion of an authorised officer, affect the comfort of the passenger, the above measurement shall be ascertained by measuring the distance between the seatbelt anchorages.
- vi) Seats, seat covers, floor coverings and interior trims shall be free from tears, damage, grease and other contamination.
- vii) Interior lighting operated either automatically when the passenger or rear doors are opened or by a separate switch operated by the driver.
- viii) An illuminated luggage compartment, which in the case of mini bus type vehicles must be segregated internal space with a minimum capacity of 0.566 cubic metres.
- ix) An internal plate (as provided by the Council) shall be fixed and displayed inside the vehicle in a clear and unobstructed location so that the particulars thereon are clearly visible to passengers.

- 3.17 No fittings or signs (except for legitimate advertising) shall be attached to the inside of the vehicle unless approved by the Council.

### **Vehicle Condition**

- 3.18 Licensed vehicles must at all times be maintained in a good condition and be kept clean and tidy. **All vehicle conditions and safety requirements must be satisfied throughout the vehicles time on the fleet, the Local Authority reserves the right to remove a vehicle from the fleet if the vehicle no longer complies with this Policy.** This includes the following examples which are for reference purposes only and do not constitute a definitive list of matters that may be considered relevant to evaluate whether a vehicle is in a good condition:

- i) Bodyshell/paintwork – free from rust, broken metal and other visible damage.
- ii) Door hinges shall be in good working order and be seated correctly when closed.
- iii) Windscreen and windows shall be in good clean condition and free from damage.
- iv) Free from oil leaks.

## Documentation

3.19 A vehicle licence will only be issued where there is evidence of valid:

- i) Road Tax.
- ii) Vehicle insurance.
- iii) Public Liability insurance certificate (minimum of £5 million).
- iv) Certificate of Compliance issued by Council's in-house testing station.
- v) MOT certificate (if required by law).

## Engine Numbers/Chassis Numbers

3.20 The Chassis/VIN plate and engine numbers must match the numbers recorded with the DVLA. Vehicle applications cannot be accepted without a copy of the vehicle registration document or, in the case of a new vehicle purchase, sales documentation indicating the engine and chassis numbers. Where the registration document is not provided at the time of initial licensing it must be provided within 6 weeks of the grant of licence. In the event of a vehicle being presented with numbers that do not correspond to the paperwork the Council will inform the Police who will undertake checks to ensure the vehicle is not stolen.

## Colour

3.21 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

3.22 Alternatives to the above technical specification will only be acceptable if, in the opinion of a licensing officer, the colour accurately replicates those detailed above.

3.23 **Subject to satisfying all other relevant requirements detailed in this policy, the Council has no age restriction provided all vehicles comply with Euro 6 engine standards or emission free from 1st September 2025. (Wheelchair accessible vehicles will be exempt from this requirement until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026)**

3.24 Subject to satisfying all other relevant requirements detailed in this policy, there is no age restriction for vehicles that are powered solely by electricity or otherwise can be regarded as being truly 'zero emission at source' or that are wheelchair accessible.

### **Term of Licence**

- 3.25 All vehicle licences will be valid for a maximum period of up to 12 months or such lesser period as the Council thinks appropriate. Where a lesser period applies, a reduced fee will be payable consisting of the application fee plus a daily rate for the number of days to be licensed.

### **Insurance**

- 3.26 All vehicles must have, at all times, a current valid policy of motor insurance appropriate to the local authority licence being held and public liability insurance (minimum £5 million). This policy must be in place before a licence can be granted.
- 3.27 It is an offence to drive a vehicle without the appropriate insurance in place. Requests to produce insurance may be made during the term of the licence. These requests must be complied with in accordance with the time scales stipulated in the request.
- 3.28 If a vehicle is off the road and uninsured the proprietor must advise the Licensing Office in writing immediately or in any event within 72 hours.

### **Insurance Write-Offs**

- 3.29 **Vehicles that have at any time been declared an ‘insurance write off’ in category A, B, and S and/or have their V5 document endorsed as being ‘accident damaged’ will not be licensed. Category N (non-structural damage) may be considered, subject to a satisfactory independent engineers report and independent mechanical examination. If a licensed vehicle is involved in an accident which results in the vehicle being declared an insurance write off (other than category N) then the licence will be revoked and the no further application to licence the vehicle will be permitted.**

### **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles**

- 3.30 The Council recognises the needs of people with disabilities and reminds the taxi trade of their legal obligations to provide equality in the provision of all of their services.
- 3.31 In order to ensure that there are sufficient suitable vehicles available that can meet the needs of those who must travel in their wheelchair, Hartlepool Borough Council requires that all new hackney carriages shall be ‘wheelchair accessible’.

- 3.32 A 'wheelchair accessible' vehicle is defined as a vehicle that is designed and constructed to allow a passenger to be transported without them having to leave their wheelchair either before, during or after their journey (i.e. a passenger should be able to stay seated in their wheelchair whilst it is loaded onto the vehicle; should be able to stay seated in their wheelchair during their journey; and be able to remain seated in their wheelchair as it is unloaded from the vehicle).
- 3.33 A 'new hackney carriage' for the purposes of this policy means a vehicle presented for licensing in Hartlepool for the first time and which is not a replacement of a vehicle already licensed as a hackney carriage in Hartlepool.
- 3.34 If the vehicle to be replaced is a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it must be replaced by another wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- 3.35 The Council will license both purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles and vehicles that are suitable in size and design, and have been converted or adapted after the date of first registration to enable the carriage of a wheelchair. This is provided that the conversion is carried out by an approved vehicle convertor such as the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Converters' Association and a certificate of fitting provided by the convertor is supplied as an original document.
- 3.36 Where the vehicle is a rear or side loading wheelchair accessible vehicle a suitable ramp or lift must be carried in the vehicle at all times.
- 3.37 The proprietor of a wheelchair accessible hackney carriage shall ensure that the collection and delivery of wheelchair users takes place at safe and appropriate locations.
- 3.38 All equipment must be kept in good working order for the safe carriage of passengers.
- 3.39 The Council expects proprietors to ensure that their drivers are familiar with the correct means of securing wheelchairs and their passengers in such vehicles.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

- 3.40 If carrying a fire extinguisher it must be of suitable size and type, be in good working order and be regularly tested by a qualified person.

### **CCTV In Vehicles**

- 3.41 The Council supports drivers who wish to install and operate CCTV systems for the protection of themselves and their passengers but, when they do, they must, at all times, comply with the following requirements; -

- i) If CCTV is installed, the proprietor of any vehicle with CCTV must display a sign approved by the Council advising passengers that a CCTV system is in operation in the vehicle.
- ii) Any reports of misuse of CCTV or recorded images may result in the immediate referral to the Licensing Committee with a view to suspending both the vehicle and driver licences.
- iii) Drivers must satisfy all legal requirements relating to data protection.

### **Cleanliness**

- 3.42 The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle is in a safe, clean and tidy condition both inside and out to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers.

### **Advertisements, Signs, Notices etc.**

- 3.43 Signs, notices or advertisements must not be of a content that a licensing officer deems to be offensive or abusive. Further guidance as to the content of the advert may be sought from the Advertisement Standards Authority, [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk)
- 3.44 There is no requirement for an advertisement that complies with this policy to be approved in advance but, if it is not so approved and is found to be in breach of this policy, the vehicle licence will be suspended until the advertisement is amended/removed.
- 3.45 No advertising on vehicles shall:
- i) Be affixed to any window of the vehicle
  - ii) Be affixed to any door or panel on which the Council issued roundel or sign is located
  - iii) Promote tobacco products
  - iv) Promote alcoholic products without the prominent disclaimer 'Please Drink Responsibly'
  - v) Be offensive or misleading in nature or character. As this matter is subjective, the decision of the licensing officer shall be deemed final.
- 3.46 Advertisements shall be constructed of such robust design and materials, and fitted professionally, as to be capable of retaining high standards of appearance. Any vehicles displaying advertisements considered by the Licensing Officer to fall below such a high quality will be suspended until the advertisement is either removed or satisfactorily repaired.
- 3.47 If advertising is situated in the interior of the vehicle it shall be subject to the proviso that it does not detrimentally affect the safety or comfort of passengers.

- 3.48 To avoid confusion for the general public, no vehicle, other than a hackney carriage, shall have a roof sign.

### **Swivel Seats**

- 3.49 Where fitted as a passenger seat, certificates of fitting from an authorised fitter must be obtained and produced to the Council before a vehicle can be tested and/or licensed.

### **Spare Tyres**

- 3.50 Vehicles shall be fitted with a means of allowing a journey to be continued, unassisted, in the event of a puncture or other tyre/wheel malfunction. Where vehicles are supplied by the manufacturer fitted with a space saver spare tyre the Council will permit their use in licensed vehicles, subject to the following:
- i) Other than for the completion of a journey that has already begun, the carriage of passengers is not permitted whilst such a tyre is fitted
  - ii) The tyre used must be supplied or recommended by the manufacturer of the vehicle concerned and shall be replaced after it has been used on the vehicle.
  - iii) The space saver is used for an emergency or temporary purpose to enable the vehicle to be driven to a place of repair.
  - iv) Due to the speed restriction and the fact that the tyre compound is generally softer (to simulate traction capabilities to compensate for imbalance) the distance travelled using a space saver should not be in excess of 50 miles.
- 3.51 Tyres on the same axle must be of the same nominal size and aspect ratio.

### **Tinted Windows**

- 3.52 Hartlepool BC has a duty to protect children and young people from all forms abuse including, amongst other things, trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- 3.53 As the licensing authority for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, the Council believes it is important that any children or young people using such vehicles can be safe and feel safe.
- 3.54 To help ensure this, the Council considers that it is reasonable and proportionate to take steps to ensure that children and young people remain visible once they have entered a licensed vehicle – or to put it another way, that they do not become invisible.
- 3.55 This can be partly achieved by ensuring that front and rear windows allow a minimum amount of light to pass through – thereby allowing front and rear passengers to be seen from outside the vehicle.

- 3.56 The Council's specification relating to the use of tinted windows in licensed vehicles is as follows: -
- i) The windscreen shall have a minimum light transmission of 75%
  - ii) All other front windows of the vehicle shall have a minimum of 70% light transmission
  - iii) All rear windows of the vehicle shall have a minimum of 30% light transmission.
- 3.57 Nothing shall be attached to any window that may detrimentally affect visibility.

### **Sliding Doors**

- 3.58 Where sliding doors are an integral part of a vehicle and a locking device has not been fitted the child locking systems shall be engaged by the driver at all times when the vehicle is in motion and carrying passengers. The opening and closing mechanism shall not be altered so as to prevent the doors from locking into the open position.

### **Alteration of Vehicle**

- 3.59 The proprietor must not change the design or condition of the vehicle without first obtaining the written approval of the Council.

### **Number of Passengers to be carried**

- 3.60 A proprietor or driver of a licensed vehicle shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in the vehicle, any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the carriage.

### **Change of Address**

- 3.61 The proprietor shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address within seven days of such change taking place.

### **Change of Private Hire Operator**

- 3.62 Private hire vehicles must operate via one Private Hire Operator at any moment in time. The proprietor must notify the Council of any change in Private Hire Operator before undertaking bookings for the new operator.

### **Fares & Fees**

- 3.63 The Council is not able to set fares for private hire vehicles. It is a matter for negotiation between the hirer and operator at the time of booking and the operator should make this clear. When a hackney carriage vehicle is used

for private hire services the fare charged cannot exceed that which would be charged under the table of fares applicable to hackney carriages.

- 3.64 Meters installed in hackney carriages must be used for every journey undertaken within the Borough of Hartlepool – regardless of how the vehicle was hired. Drivers are free to charge their customer less than the final price indicated on the meter but cannot charge more. When a journey ends outside of the Council's area a fare greater or lesser than that shown on the meter may be charged but only if an agreement has been made with the hirer in advance. In the absence of such an agreement, only the metered fare or lesser can be charged.
- 3.65 The Council will review the table of fares annually or when requested by the trade - usually in January of each year. When determining the level of fares, consideration will be given to what is reasonable to expect the travelling public to pay as well as the need to give the owners/drivers an incentive to provide a service at all times it is needed.
- 3.66 A notice of any variation to the maximum fare will be advertised in a local newspaper with a date set 14 days from publication for making objections to the proposed variation. If no objections are received the fare variation will have effect on a day specified at the end of the 14 day consultation period. If any objections are received the matter will be referred to the Licensing Committee for consideration.
- 3.67 In the interests of consistency for the general public, all meters must be calibrated to the current table of fares but drivers have the discretion to charge less than the displayed fare if they wish.

### **Table of Fares**

- 3.68 A table of fares will be provided to each hackney carriage licence holder, which must be displayed in each vehicle on the interior of the offside rear passenger window so that it is easily visible to all hirers. This requirement shall apply equally to private hire vehicles where a meter is fitted.

### **Hackney Carriages – Roof Signs**

- 3.69 Hackney carriages must have a roof sign that is a minimum of 600 mm (24 inches) in length affixed to the roof whenever the vehicle is in the Borough of Hartlepool and this must be illuminated when the vehicle is available for hire.
- 3.70 In order to allow hackney carriages to be more efficient, and environmentally friendly, an allowance has been made for the roof sign to be removed when the vehicle is undertaking a booking that takes it outside Hartlepool.



- 3.71 If the roof sign is not affixed to the vehicle, whilst in Hartlepool, the driver of the vehicle must be able to demonstrate to a licensing officer, on request, that the vehicle is, at that time, engaged in an 'out of town' booking.
- 3.72 Any failure of a driver to do so will result in this allowance being removed in respect of that vehicle.
- 3.73 Magnetic or other temporary roof signs must be made of suitable and appropriate materials, and attached in such a manner, as to be safe for passengers, pedestrians and other road users.

### **Hackney Carriages – Booking Records**

- 3.74 When carrying out pre-booked work, a hackney carriage shall be used predominantly for journeys that will either begin or end in Hartlepool.
- 3.75 The word 'predominantly' shall mean 90% of all pre-booked work within any continuous seven- day period. **All** pre-booked work shall be recorded and made available to authorised officers on request: -
- i) In a suitable form in a continuous, chronological order, the pages of which are consecutively numbered, or
  - ii) On a computer which keeps backup records and is immediately capable of producing a printed record from the computer onto paper.
- 3.76 Records must not be capable of retrospective alteration or amendment, and the driver must enter, before the commencement of each journey, the following particulars of every booking by him/her:
- i) Name and address of the hirer
  - ii) Date, time and pickup point of the booking;
  - iii) Destination;
  - iv) Number of passengers to be carried;
  - v) When and how the booking was made i.e. telephone, personal call;
  - vi) Amount to be charged; (where applicable)
- 3.77 If the pre-booking is part of a contract i.e. education/school run then proof of the contract must be kept and made available to a licensing officer on request.

### **Loss/Theft of Licence Plate**

- 3.78 The proprietor must report the loss/theft of licence plate(s) to the Licensing Office, and obtain replacements, as soon as the loss becomes known and, in any case, within 2 working days.

### **Changes of Vehicle**

3.79 If a proprietor wishes to change the vehicle to which a licence relates (i.e. to change the vehicle but retain the vehicle licence number), the following procedures must be followed: -

- i) The proprietor must complete an application form for the “new” vehicle
- ii) Pay the relevant fee
- iii) Return the plates from the previous vehicle
- iv) Presented for test and subsequently pass.
- v) Produce evidence of insurance and all other required documentation.

3.80 The expiry date on the ‘new vehicle’ licence will be 12 months from the grant of the ‘new’ licence.

### **Change of Ownership**

3.81 If a proprietor wishes to transfer the ownership of a vehicle to which a licence relates, the following procedures must be followed within 14 days of the transfer taking place: -

- i) A transfer form must be submitted – signed by both the previous and new owner(s)
- ii) The new owner must pay the relevant transfer fee
- iii) The new owner must produce evidence of insurance and all other required documentation

### **Surrender of licence**

3.82 A vehicle licence may be surrendered at any time and any refund of licence fee will be calculated as a pro rata daily rate on the number of days licence remaining, plus any mechanical inspections not yet undertaken less the administration fee.

### **Licence Fees**

3.83 The fee structure is reviewed annually as part of the budgetary process. Notice of the current scale of fees will be supplied to new applicants at the time of application.

3.84 A notice of any variation to the fees in respect of vehicles and operators will be advertised in a local newspaper with a date set 28 days from publication for making objections to the variation of fees.

3.85 Following consultation, if no objections are received the fee variation will have immediate effect (or at a later date as indicated by the Council). If any objections are received the matter will be re-considered.

## **PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS**

### **Essential Requirements & Conditions of Licence**

- 4.1 Prior to being licensed, and in order to remain licensed, all private hire operators must complete and submit an application form, pay the appropriate licence fee and meet the following requirements which, when a licence is in force, shall be regarded as conditions of that licence.
- 4.2 Should payment be made by cheque, which is subsequently dishonoured, any licence issued shall be null and void.
- 4.3 Any person who operates private hire vehicles must apply to the Council for a private hire operator licence. The objective in licensing private hire operators is to ensure the protection of the public who will be using the operator's premises and the vehicles and drivers arranged through them.
- 4.4 Operators need to familiarise themselves with the law and ensure they employ suitable work methods in order to comply with the law and avoid committing licensing offences.
- 4.5 Private Hire Operator licences will only be granted to applicants who have an operating base within the controlled district of the Council, or to new applicants, who can demonstrate that there will be such an operating base within the controlled district of the Council. This requirement must be complied with at all times during the duration of a licence.
- 4.6 An operating base means a building that it is used for the taking of private hire bookings.

### **Licence Duration**

- 4.7 Licences will be issued for a maximum period of 5 years or such lesser period as the Council thinks appropriate.

### **Criminal Record Checks**

- 4.8 Private Hire Operator licences can only be granted to persons that the Council are satisfied are fit and proper.
- 4.9 Before an application for a Private Hire Operator licence will be considered the applicant must provide a basic DBS disclosure certificate to the Council that is no more than 30 days old.
- 4.10 For corporate applications, the above documentation will be required for each company director and the company secretary.

- 4.11 If the applicant is currently licensed as a driver with the Council they will be exempt from this requirement as they will have already undergone a DBS check.
- 4.12 Applicants for renewal of a Private Hire Operator licence who are not licensed as drivers will be required to provide a new certificate or search results every third year.
- 4.13 All applicants for a Private Hire Operator licence shall be referred to the Licensing Committee for determination if the record of criminal convictions casts doubt on their fitness to be granted a licence.

### **Convictions**

- 4.14 If the operator is cautioned or convicted of any motoring or criminal offence (s)he must notify the Council, in writing, within 7 days. If the licence is in the name of a Company or Partnership the cautions/convictions of any Directors or Partners must be disclosed.

### **Insurance**

- 4.15 Applicants are required to produce proof of appropriate public liability insurance (£5 million).

### **Planning Consent**

- 4.16 Applicants are required to obtain planning consent, where necessary, for the premises from which they intend to operate. The Planning Authority will be consulted as part of the application for a Private Hire Operator Licence and their comments may be taken into account when determining whether the licence should be granted. The Licensing Manager has the discretion to refer any application to the Licensing Committee.

### **Record Keeping**

- 4.17 Operators are required to keep records of the following for each booking: -
- a) Name of passenger
  - b) Time of request
  - c) Pick up point
  - d) Destination
  - e) Name and licence number of driver despatched
  - f) Vehicle registration number
  - g) Name of any individual who responded to the booking request
  - h) Name of any individual who despatched the vehicle
  - i) Where relevant, a record that confirmation was sought and obtained regarding the use of a PCV driver to undertake a booking (see para 4.41).

- 4.18 Records should be preserved for a period of not less than 12 months and be available for inspection at the request of an authorised officer of the Council or Police.
- 4.19 Where deemed necessary by the authorised officer, a copy (paper or digital) of requested booking records must be provided to the officer within 3 days or, if considered urgent by the officer, within 24 hours of request.

### **Complaints**

- 4.20 The operator must maintain written or computer records of all complaints received concerning a contract for hire or purported contract for hire relating to or arising from his/her business (including any sub-contracted work) and the action that was taken. These details shall be maintained for a minimum of six months and be made available to a licensing officer on request.
- 4.21 The operator must notify the Council, in writing, within 7 days of any complaints and of the action (if any), which the operator has taken or proposes to take.
- 4.22 Where a complaint is investigated by an Authorised Officer of the Council the operator shall comply with any reasonable directions of the Officer in respect of that complaint.

### **Change of Business Address**

- 4.23 A Private Hire Operator licence is granted to the operator for the premises detailed at the time of application. The operator must notify the Council of any intention to locate to an alternative address so that consideration may be given to its potential relevance to the licence in force.

### **Change of Home Address**

- 4.24 The operator, or in the case of a company or limited liability partnership, the directors, secretary or members/partners as the case may be, must advise the Council in writing of any change of his home address within 7 days of such a change taking place.

### **Material Change**

- 4.25 A Private Hire Operator Licence is not transferable and operators must notify any proposed changes to the person(s) authorised to operate under the terms of the licence to the Council immediately in writing.

### **Display of Licence**

- 4.26 If the public has access to the operating premises you are required to display your Private Hire operator Licence in your operating premises together with a copy of your licence conditions and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

### **Equal Opportunities**

- 4.27 The operator must at all times treat his/her passengers or any potential passenger with courtesy and respect. The operator and his/her employees must not discriminate against any person because of their race, colour, creed, gender or disability.

### **Facilities for Passengers**

- 4.28 The operator must ensure that where any passenger waiting area or room is provided, it is kept physically separate from any driver rest area and operations room. Where a waiting area or room is provided for the use of passengers or prospective passengers the operator shall:
- i) Provide adequate seating for the use of those passengers or prospective passengers; and
  - ii) Ensure that such room or area is kept clean, adequately heated, ventilated and lit; and
  - iii) Ensure that the interior and exterior of the premises are kept in good repair, to the satisfaction of the Council.

### **Fares**

- 4.29 The fare charged by the Operator shall be agreed with the hirer at the time of booking.

### **Parking**

- 4.30 Where adequate off street parking is not available at the operating address specified on the licence the operator shall inform the Council, in writing of all locations where vehicles will be parked when waiting for bookings.

### **Right of Access**

- 4.31 The Operator must permit any authorised Officer of the Council onto his/her operating premises at all times when acting as a Private Hire Operator and provide him/her with access to all records which (s)he may reasonably require.

### **Standard of Service**

- 4.32 The operator must provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public at all reasonable times and for this purpose must, in particular:
- i) Ensure that when a private hire vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, the vehicle must attend at the appointed time and place unless unavoidably delayed.
  - ii) Keep clean, adequately heated, ventilated and lit any premises which are provided and to which the public have access, whether for the purpose of booking or waiting.
  - iii) Ensure that any telephone facilities and radio equipment provided are, at all times, kept in good working order and that any defects are repaired promptly.
  - iv) Not describe by the use of advertising signs, printed words, broadcasts or by any other media the word "Hackney Carriage" or "Taxi", or any derivative to describe the private hire services offered.

### **Taximeters**

- 4.33 When taximeters are used the operator must notify the Council of the fare rate and any subsequent changes made to that fare rate during the period of the Operator licence.
- 4.34 Where any vehicle operated is fitted with an approved taximeter the operator shall ensure that the taximeter is set to the fare rate notified to the Council and properly sealed in accordance with Council regulations.

### **Vehicles to be used**

- 4.35 It shall be a requirement that hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers that have been licensed by Hartlepool Borough Council shall be used within the controlled district of Hartlepool unless it is necessary to sub-contract a booking.
- 4.36 In this case the operator must ensure that the same standard of vehicle and driver is provided by the sub-contractor. This is to ensure that the travelling public of Hartlepool are provided with a consistent standard of service.

### **Call Handlers and Despatch Operators**

- 4.37 It shall be the responsibility of the licensed operator to maintain a register of all staff who are, or may be, engaged in receiving calls from members of the public and/or despatching vehicles to undertake bookings.
- 4.38 The register must contain details including each member of staff's name and a record of when they provided a basic criminal records check to the operator. Any criminal records check submitted as part of this requirement

should have been recently issued. The only exception to this requirement shall be those call handlers and despatch operators that were employed in those positions prior to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

- 4.39 The licensed operator must have a policy on the employment of ex-offenders and apply this policy when appointing staff to handle calls and/or despatch vehicles. This policy must be made available to an authorised officer on request.

#### **Use of PCV Drivers**

- 4.40 Members of the public are entitled to expect, when making a booking with a private hire vehicle operator, that they will receive a private hire vehicle licensed vehicle and driver. The use of a driver who holds a PCV licence and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV) such as a minibus to undertake a private hire vehicle booking **should not be permitted as a condition of the private hire vehicle operator's licence without the informed consent of the booker.**
- 4.41 In such circumstances, and before consent is obtained, the customer must be advised that a PCV licenced driver will be used who is subject to different checks and not required to have an enhanced DBS check.



## Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers

### Interim Suspension Policy

#### Purpose & Use

This policy will be used by Hartlepool Borough Council when it receives information that casts doubt on a driver's suitability to continue as a licensed hackney carriage or private hire driver.

This policy shall only apply where a driver's licence is to be suspended with immediate effect in the interests of public safety, by virtue of Section 61 and 61 (2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

#### Application of Policy

When Hartlepool Borough Council receives information that casts doubt on an individual's fitness to continue as a licensed driver it is obliged to make a judgement as to whether any action should be taken against that driver in order to protect the public.

Every issue will be taken on its own merits. The Council's only consideration shall be the protection of the public.

The Council will consider any information provided to it including, but not limited to, convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings, complaints, allegations and other intelligence it receives. The Council will make a determination as to what weight should be given to the information it has received when making its decision.

The Council will refer to its document: '*Guidance on Determining the Suitability of Applicants and Licensees in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trades*' to assist in its determination of the seriousness of the matter and of what action, if any, is appropriate and necessary.

If the Council believes that an interim suspension of the driver's licence is needed, it will make reasonable efforts to speak to the driver before issuing the interim suspension.

In such circumstances, an interim suspension will be issued immediately and the driver will then invited to speak to Council officers at the earliest reasonable opportunity thereafter.

Any interim suspension of a licensed driver shall be time limited but, depending on the circumstances, the expiry of one interim suspension may be followed by the immediate issue of another if it is deemed necessary and appropriate in the interests of public safety.

In most cases, an interim suspension shall not be lifted until such time as the circumstances surrounding it have been considered by the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee.

### Making a Determination

In making its determination the Council shall consider, amongst other things, the following matters: -

1. Would the person charged with making the decision, allow their son or daughter, spouse or partner, mother or father, grandson or granddaughter, or any other person for whom they care to get into a vehicle with this person alone?
2. Would the Council grant a licence to a new applicant who declared the current issue on their application form?

## **PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER CONDITIONS**

### **Change of Address**

- PH1 Drivers must notify the Council, in writing, of any change of address during the period of the licence within 7 days of such a change taking place.

### **Conduct of Driver**

- PH2 Drivers shall comply with the Code of Good Conduct for licensed drivers.

### **Convictions**

- PH3 The driver shall within seven days of any arrest, charge, conviction, caution, reprimand or warning (relating to motoring and non-motoring convictions) notify the Council's licensing team in writing.

### **Driver's Badge**

- PH4 A driver shall at all times when acting in accordance with the driver's licence granted to him wear such a badge in such position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible.

### **Equal Opportunities**

- PH5 Drivers must at all times treat passengers or any potential passenger with courtesy and respect. Drivers must not discriminate against any person because of their race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

### **Fare to be Demanded**

- PH6 Drivers must not demand a fare greater than previously agreed with the passenger and the operator. If a taximeter is in use only the fare displayed, or a lesser fare, may be charged

### **Animals**

- PH7 Drivers must not carry any animals in their vehicle other than those belonging to or in the care of their passenger(s). Any animal belonging to or in the care of any passenger should be carried in the rear of the vehicle only (except for guide, hearing or assistance dogs who are not restricted to the rear of the vehicle).

### **Lost Property**

- PH8 When passengers have been dropped off the driver must check the vehicle for any property accidentally left there. If any is found it must be returned to the passenger or handed into a police station as soon as possible and no later than the end of that shift.

### **Medical Condition**

- PH9 The Council must be immediately notified of any deterioration in the driver's medical condition that may affect their ability to drive private hire vehicles.

### **Carrying Passengers**

- PH10 Drivers must not:
- i) Carry more passengers in their vehicle than is permitted by the vehicle licence.
  - ii) Carry more than one person in the front seat unless the vehicle is furnished with a bench type front seat 1270mm or more in length between the doors and provided with seat belts for all front seat. passengers. In this case no more than 2 passengers may be carried.
  - iii) Without the consent of the hirer, carry any additional person in the vehicle.

### **Prompt Attendance**

- PH11 Drivers must always pick up passengers on time unless unavoidably delayed. If a driver is to be delayed, they, or their operator, would be expected to notify the passenger of any delay as soon as possible.

### **Receipts**

- PH12 The driver must, if requested, provide the passenger(s) with a written receipt for the fare paid including the amount of VAT (if applicable) shown separately if so requested. The driver should provide details of the journey including the date, fare, vehicle, operator and name of driver and sign the receipt.

### **Taximeters in PHVs**

- PH13 If the private hire vehicle is fitted with a meter the driver:

- i) Must not cancel or conceal the fare recorded until the hirer has had a reasonable opportunity of examining it and has paid the fare (unless credit is to be given).
- ii) Must ensure that when the vehicle is not hired the key is to be locked and the machinery kept inactive and the meter must show no fare at any time.
- iii) Must ensure that the meter is sufficiently illuminated when in use and is visible to all passengers.
- iv) Must ensure that the meter is only brought into action and the fare or charge must only commence from the point at which the hirer starts his/her journey.
- v) Must ensure that the fare charged does not exceed the fare displayed on the meter at the end of the journey.

### **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

PH14 On those occasions where the Council has reason to suspect that a driver may be abusing drugs or alcohol, the driver shall undertake drug or alcohol tests as required by the Council, at the authority's expense, within a reasonable period of time or, if considered necessary by the Council, as quickly as practicable.

### **CCTV & Other Recording Devices**

PH15 Drivers are in a position of trust and passengers can expect complete privacy and discretion when hiring a licensed vehicle.

Drivers shall not video or record passengers other than through a CCTV system that has been installed specifically for the purposes of deterring or detecting crime and which complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Any footage obtained of passengers must not be made publicly available other than to a law enforcement agency.

No still or moving images or audio recordings or transcripts of audio recordings must be made available on social media or by other means.

**Any driver found breaching the above requirements will be referred to the Council's Licensing Committee with a recommendation that their driver's licence be revoked.**

Appendix III

### **CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT FOR LICENSED DRIVERS**

In order to promote its licensing objectives as regards hackney carriage and private hire licensing, the Council has adopted the following Code of Good Conduct, which should be read in conjunction with the other statutory and policy requirements set out in this document.

Failure to comply with this Code may be taken into account when assessing a driver's fitness to continue to hold a licence.

### **General**

- GC1 Licensed drivers are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all time, whether in the context of their work or otherwise. Licensees should be courteous, avoid confrontation, not be abusive or exhibit prejudice in any way. Licensees are expected to act with integrity and demonstrate conduct befitting the trust that is placed in them.

### **Responsibility to the Trade**

- GC2 Licence holders shall endeavour to promote the image of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade by:
- i) Complying with this Code of Good Conduct
  - ii) Complying with legislation, all the Conditions of their licence and the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
  - iii) Behaving in a professional manner at all times

### **Responsibility to Clients**

- GC3 Licence holders shall:
- i) Take the shortest available route. Where a diversion is to be taken, this must be clearly explained to the passenger.
  - ii) Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers while they are entering, travelling in or leaving the vehicle.
  - iii) Treat passengers or any potential passenger with courtesy and respect at all times.
  - iv) Not engage in any dialogue or activities with a passenger that may, to any reasonable person, be considered offensive or inappropriate.
  - v) Maintain their vehicles in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times
  - vi) Keep their vehicles clean and suitable for hire to the public at all times
  - vii) Attend punctually when undertaking pre-booked hiring
  - viii) Assist, where necessary, passengers into and out of vehicles
  - ix) Offer passengers reasonable assistance with luggage and/or other bags
  - x) Offer assistance to elderly/infirm or disabled passengers
  - xi) Not smoke tobacco products, e-cigarettes or other similar nicotine delivery devices inside their vehicle at any time.

### **Responsibility to Residents**

GC4 To avoid nuisance to residents when picking up or waiting for a fare, a driver shall:

- i) Not sound the vehicle's horn.
- ii) Keep the volume of in-car entertainment systems to a minimum.
- iii) Switch off the engine if required to wait.
- iv) Take whatever additional action is necessary to avoid disturbance to residents in the neighbourhood.
- v) Not deposit any litter other than into a bin.
- vi) Not engage in any form of anti-social behaviour.

At hackney carriage ranks and other places where hackney carriages ply for hire by forming queues, drivers shall, in addition to the requirements above:

- vii) Rank in an orderly manner and proceed along the rank in order and promptly.
- viii) Remain with the vehicle.

### **General**

GC5 Drivers shall:

- i) Drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians.
- ii) Obey all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all time.
- iii) Comply with the rules and spirit of the Highway Code.
- iv) Ensure they do not smell of alcohol or drive whilst under the influence of alcohol.
- v) Pay attention to personal hygiene and dress in accordance with the Dress Code.
- vi) Behave in a civil and orderly manner at all times.
- vii) Ensure that all passenger doors are unlocked immediately upon arrival at the destination or on any other occasion when the vehicle is stationary and the passenger asks to leave.
- viii) Cooperate fully during any investigation by an authorised officer.

Drivers must not:

- i) Drive while having used illegal drugs or having taken other medication that may have an impact on their ability to drive
- ii) Engage in any dialogue or activities of a sexual nature whilst acting as a driver of any vehicle licensed by this Council. This includes inappropriate touching of passengers.
- iii) Not smoke tobacco products, e-cigarettes or other similar nicotine delivery devices inside their vehicle at any time.
- iv) Drink or eat in the vehicle at any time while carrying passengers (best practice is for rest periods to be taken away from the vehicle).
- v) Play any radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the vehicle other than for the purpose of sending or receiving messages in connection with the operation of the vehicle without the consent of the passenger

### **Smoking and E-Cigarettes**

- GC6 It is against the law to smoke tobacco products in a licensed vehicle.  
In addition, drivers shall not use an e-cigarette or other nicotine delivery device in a licensed vehicle at any time.

### **CCTV and Other Recording Devices**

- GC7 Drivers are in a position of trust and passengers can expect complete privacy and discretion when hiring a licensed vehicle.

Drivers shall not video or record passengers other than through a CCTV system that has been installed specifically for the purposes of deterring or detecting crime and which complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Any footage obtained of passengers must not be made publicly available other than to a law enforcement agency.

No still or moving images or audio recordings or transcripts of audio recordings must be made available on social media or by other means.

**Any driver found breaching the above requirements will be referred to the Council's Licensing Committee with a recommendation that their driver's licence be revoked.**

### **Please Note:**

**ANY AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS CAN AFFECT A DRIVER'S JUDGEMENT**

**THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE A VERY SERIOUS VIEW OF ANY DRIVER BEING FOUND TO HAVE CONSUMED ANY ALCOHOL OR HAVING MISUSED ANY DRUGS PRIOR TO OR WHILST IN CHARGE OF A LICENSED VEHICLE.**

### **DRESS CODE**

- GC8 The purpose of a driver's dress code is to seek a standard of dress that provides a positive image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade in Hartlepool to enhance a professional image of licensed drivers and ensure that public and driver safety is not compromised.

### **Acceptable Standard of Dress**

- GC9 As a minimum standard, drivers must wear either long legged trousers, knee length shorts, skirt or dress and T shirts which have a full body and short sleeves.



## **Footwear**

GC10 Footwear for all drivers shall be appropriate for safe driving.

## **Unacceptable Standard of Dress**

GC11 The following are deemed to be unacceptable:

- i) Clothing that is not kept in a clean condition, free from holes and rips.
- ii) Words or graphics on any clothing that is of an offensive or suggestive nature or which might offend.
- iii) Sportswear (e.g. football/rugby kits, track suits, beach wear etc.).
- iv) Sandals with no heel straps, flip flops or any other form of footwear not secured around the heel.
- v) Drivers not having either the top or bottom half of their bodies suitably clothed
- vi) No headwear, or other items which partially or completely cover the head or face or identity of the licensed driver e.g. baseball caps and hoodies, shall be worn other than when a uniform is worn for a special occasion, or for religious purposes.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICY AND ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR STRETCHED LIMOUSINES, NOVELTY VEHICLES, CLASSIC VEHICLES AND EXECUTIVE VEHICLES**

**These conditions are IN ADDITION to the standard Private Hire Vehicle conditions except where stated.**

Each application will be assessed on its own merits and each vehicle will be inspected by an authorised council officer to ensure it complies with this policy.

Prior to being licensed, and in order to remain licensed, all vehicles to which this Appendix applies must meet the following requirements which, when a licence is in force, shall be regarded as conditions of that licence.

### **INTERPRETATION**

#### **Stretched Limousines**

- AP1 For the purpose of licensing by the Council, a limousine is a luxurious vehicle that has been stretched by the insertion of an additional section not exceeding 3048mm (120 inches) to extend the length of the vehicle.

The vehicle shall be capable of carrying up to (but not exceeding) eight seated passengers. Each passenger seating area will be at least 400mm wide.

#### **Novelty Vehicles**

- AP2 A novelty vehicle is any vehicle not traditionally used to carry fare paying passengers or, in any other way, is a vehicle to which licence conditions detailed in this policy cannot, by the vehicle's nature, reasonably apply.

#### **Classic Cars**

- AP3 A classic car is any vehicle that was first registered more than 25 years prior to the date of licence application.

#### **Executive Cars**

- AP4 An executive vehicle is equivalent to the European E-segment classification. It must be capable of carrying four or more passengers and be equipped to the highest standards of comfort and equipment.

The vehicle must be in pristine condition with no visible interior or exterior defects, dents or blemishes.

The vehicle must be used exclusively to provide transport under a written contract lasting not less than 7 consecutive days.

### **Exemption from Requirement to Display Licence Plate**

- AP5 On application, vehicles to which this Appendix applies may be exempted from the general requirement to display a licence plate.

Vehicles exempted from the requirement to display a licence plate must, instead, fix their licence plate to the underside of the boot lid or to some other agreed location where it can be easily read if required.

Additionally, vehicles exempted from the requirement to display the licence plate must display the vehicle's licence number in the front windscreen where it can be seen from the exterior of the vehicle.

If an exemption from the need to display a licence plate is granted, the Council will issue the proprietor of the vehicle with an Exemption Notice.

Exemption Notices may be renewed annually (to coincide with the licence itself) subject to the vehicle undergoing, and passing, a re-inspection by an authorised officer to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and further proof of the continuous contract arrangements.

### **Age Limits**

- AP6 Limousines, classic cars and novelty vehicles may be of any age but must, at all times, satisfy this Policy's requirements in relation to safety, appearance and comfort.

### **Window Tint**

- AP7 Window tinting restrictions do not apply to the rear passenger windows and rear windscreen for any vehicle type listed in this Appendix.

### **Seatbelts**

- AP8 In accordance with Construction and Use Regulations, where seat belts are fitted they must be used by all passengers

### **Stretched Limousines - Construction & Appearance**

- AP9 Stretched limousines must satisfy the following requirements:
- i) The maximum length of the vehicle "stretch" shall not exceed 3048 mm.
  - ii) The vehicle should be equipped with a minimum of four road wheels and one full sized spare wheel. The tyres shall be of an approved rating as specified by the manufacturer i.e. 235/75R 15 108S (BF Goodrich Extra Load or equivalent).

Vehicles produced since 1998 should be fitted with 225/70R 16 107T (Reinforced).

- iii) In addition, tyres on the same axle must be of the same nominal size and aspect ratio.
- iv) The interior of the vehicle must be kept wind and watertight.
- v) The seats in the passenger compartment must be kept properly cushioned and covered.
- vi) The floor in the passenger compartment must be provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.
- vii) There must be adequate internal light to enable passengers to enter and leave the vehicle safely.
- viii) The internal fittings and furniture of the limousine must be kept in a clean, well-maintained condition and in every way fit and safe for public use.
- ix) Facilities must be provided for the conveyance of luggage safely and protected from inclement weather.
- x) The vehicle must have at least two doors for use of persons conveyed in the vehicle and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.
- xi) Facilities must be provided to ensure that any person travelling in the limousine can communicate with the driver.

### **Stretched Limousines – Mechanical Inspections**

AP10 Limousines are required to be mechanically tested at the Council's appointed depot every six months.

### **Stretched Limousines - Documentation**

AP11 In addition to other documentation requirements detailed earlier in this policy, the following documentation, in original form or certified copies (not photocopies), shall be produced prior to licensing:

- i) Completed importation documentation – Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) or Individual Type Approval (ITA).
- ii) A Qualified Vehicle Modifier certificate – (QVM). This is issued by the Coach Builder.
- iii) Documentation to show the overall weight of the vehicle (as displayed on the vehicle).

### **Stretched Limousines - Passengers**

AP11 Where the passengers in the vehicle consist solely of persons under the age of 16 they must be accompanied by a responsible adult, other than the driver, who is over the age of 16 years and is not connected to the driver.

All passengers must remain seated at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

With the exception of the responsible adult detailed above, passengers must not be carried in the front of the vehicle.

### **Stretched Limousines - Uniforms**

AP12 The proprietor shall ensure that the driver of the vehicle shall be appropriately dressed in a chauffeur's uniform or 'business type' suit when the vehicle is hired.

## **CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE LICENSING OF HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGES (LANDAUS) AND THEIR DRIVERS**

### **General**

Prior to being licensed, and in order to remain licensed, all horse drawn carriages must meet the following requirements which, when a licence is in force, shall be regarded as conditions of that licence.

### **Making an Application - Essential Requirements**

- HD1 Prior to a vehicle licence being issued the applicant, being the proprietor of the vehicle, shall complete and submit to the Council an application on the prescribed form together with the required licence fee no later than 14 days prior to the licence being required.

If payment is made by cheque which is subsequently dishonoured any licence issued shall be null and void. Licence fees are non-refundable.

### **The Vehicle - External Construction and Markings**

- HD2 The vehicle shall be purpose built and suitable for the carriage of passengers.
- HD3 The vehicle shall be inspected and approved as appropriate for use as a hackney carriage prior to licensing.
- i) Carriage licence plates shall be fixed to the rear of the vehicle in a clear and conspicuous location in a vertical plane at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle.
  - ii) Licensed carriages must at all times be maintained in a good condition and be kept clean and tidy. This includes the following examples which are for reference only and does not constitute a definitive list of matters that may be considered to evaluate whether a vehicle is in a good condition:
    - a) Bodyshell/paintwork – free from rust, broken metal and other visible damage.
    - b) Door hinges – shall be in good working order and to be seated correctly when closed.
  - iii) No external markings shall be permitted on the vehicle with the exception of the name and contact number of the owner/operator which may be displayed in the upper half of both passenger doors. Such advertisements must, in the opinion of an authorised officer, be tasteful and decent.
  - iv) The carriage must be fitted with such equipment as to be able to collect and retain horse manure, water and feed for the animal.
  - v) All tack and fixtures must be kept in good order and be available for inspection by authorised officers.

### **The Vehicle - Internal construction and markings**

HD4 The carriage shall meet the following minimum measurements:

- i) Seats (length) – the shortest distance between the front and back of a seat (i.e. from the back rest to the front edge) must not be less than 450mm.
- ii) In the case of rear facing seats, the distance between the backs of facing seats shall not be less than 1520mm. In all other cases the distance between the back rest of the seat and any facing obstruction must not be less than 760mm.
- iii) Seats (width) – The shortest distance between the edges of a seat shall be no less than 400 mm. Where the rear passenger seating area is divided into individual seats by way of formed cushions or other similar divide and, in the opinion of an authorised officer, affect the comfort of a passenger, the above measurement shall be ascertained by measuring the distance between seatbelt anchorages (if applicable).

HD5 Floor and seat coverings shall be kept in good condition and be free of holes, stains or other damage at all times.

HD6 Blankets shall be provided for the comfort of passengers.

HD7 No fittings or signs (except for advertising detailed below) shall be attached to the inside of vehicle unless approved by the Council.

HD8 Advertising in the interior of a vehicle is permitted but only where such advertising does not detrimentally affect the safety or comfort of passengers and is not designed or intended to be viewed from the exterior of the vehicle.

### **The Vehicle - Additional Requirements**

HD9 The proprietor of a licensed vehicle shall:

- i) Produce the licensed vehicle for inspection at the request of any authorised officer or police constable.
- ii) Return the licence to an appropriate Council Officer within 7 days of the surrender, expiry, revocation or suspension of such licence or upon the proprietor transferring his/her interest in the vehicle.
- iii) Report the loss of any plates or the vehicle licence to an appropriate Council Officer as soon as the loss becomes known.
- iv) Notify the Council of any transfer of interest or ownership within 14 days of that transfer. This must include the date of the transfer, plate number and name and address of the new owner.
- v) Comply with any reasonable request made by an authorised officer or police constable in respect of that vehicle.
- vi) Notify the Council of any significant damage to the vehicle within 72 hours of the occurrence.

### **Material Alterations**

HD10 Any material alteration to the design or construction of a vehicle must have prior approval from the Council.

### **Insurance**

HD11 The carriage must have a valid policy of insurance in respect of third party risks and a minimum of £5,000,000 public liability insurance.

### **Routes**

HD12 The carriage may only be used on previously approved routes.

### **The Horse**

HD13 The horse must be a minimum of three years old.

HD14 Horses must be appropriately shod at all times.

HD15 If a horse is considered to be lame, or in any other way unwell, it shall be removed from service immediately.

HD16 Horses must be provided with regular access to drinking water.

HD17 The horse, and its associated tack, must be examined and passed as fit for the task involved, by a qualified veterinary surgeon who may also advise the authority on the maximum number of hours that a horse may work.

HD18 The local authority shall require the horse(s) to be examined by a qualified veterinary surgeon on an annual basis, at time of renewal of the licence and at the licence holder's expense.

HD19 Certified horses should be easily identified by means of microchip or permanent marking.

HD20 The horse must have a current passport.

HD21 The horse should be stabled in appropriate accommodation with access for inspection at all reasonable times.

HD22 Any horse used in any one day as a horse drawn carriage horse shall not be used during that day for any other purpose.

HD23 No horse shall be used for drawing a carriage during the hours of darkness.

HD24 Sufficient horses must be provided to power the licensed carriage.

### **The Driver**

HD25 The driver of the carriage must be a licensed hackney carriage driver and produce the following certificates:



- i) Suitable qualification demonstrating a knowledge of the most common horse ailments and basic knowledge of the horses' general needs/requirements.
- ii) Road Driving Certificate issued by either the British Driving Society or the Heavy Horse Training Committee, passing the driver as capable of handling the horse and carriage under highway conditions.

HD26 The driver of a carriage is exempted from the requirement to hold a full drivers licence issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

HD27 The driver of a carriage is exempted from the requirement to pass the locations element of the driver's examination.

### **Fares**

HD28 A table of fares to be charged by the operator must be approved by the Council.