

## **Proposed 'Key' Policy Changes – Headlines**

- Introduction of a Taxi Licensing Management Panel to decide on lower-level cases. This will allow cases relating to Certificates of Good Conduct, withdrawal of TAS badge and others to be considered by the Panel for swifter decisions in new or renewed license applications.
- Updates on the way we are now working, namely online application process, knowledge, safeguarding tests, equality tests and wheelchair assessments.
- Introduction of process for drivers to apply for a wheelchair exemption.
- Updates on NR3s process making applicants aware that suspensions on the grounds of safety must now be included on the register and that drivers can not surrender their licences to avoid being added to the register.
- Giving updated information on protected cautions and convictions that cannot be taken into account when considering driver suitability.
- Removal of driver dress code to what would not be considered appropriate attire.
- Updating period for notification of any convictions, address or name change to be reported to the council within a shorter period (48 hours).
- Introduction of a referral to committee if a driver has an excessive number of accidents within a 6 or 12-month period.
- New conditions of licence for private hire and dual drivers, hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and private hire operators. Conditions have been updated to be more user friendly and introduce some of the requirements/suggestions set out by DfT and IOL. Conditions of licence will also be moved to become an appendix rather than part of the main policy.
- New section making it clear that a vehicle can only be plated by one council at a time and that dual plating is not acceptable.
- New Section on accident/hire company vehicles, limiting a licence to no more than 3 months, with additional conditions over and above the normal licence conditions, due to these vehicles being licensed by multiple authorities, hire companies keeping plates

and putting drivers into the vehicles without notifying the licence team.

- Updating the garage process having brought on additional garages and updating the testing regime so that all vehicles regardless of age are subjected to the same checks.
- Introduction of a vehicle emissions policy based on Euro ratings, giving grandfather rights to existing vehicle licence holders only, so that any “new” licensed vehicles must comply with the new policy once introduced. Giving notice that from 2030 all new vehicles for licensing must be either full electric or zero emissions. Existing vehicles that do not meet the criteria will not be able to be transferred and if they fail two consecutive tests, will have their licence application refused.
- Removal of roof signs from private hire vehicles to identify the operator in line with DfT guidance and only allow door signs. (DfT were suggesting getting rid of door signs as well, but we have made the decision to retain.
- Following DfT guidance in respect of considering non-purpose-built vehicles as hackney carriages and retaining the requirement that these vehicles must be black, and should the same model wished to be considered for private hire that it can be any colour other than black to increase the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles for customers.
- New section on accidents and the reporting process.
- Clarification on criteria vehicles must meet to both be and remain licensed.
- Allowing vehicles that have been written off for financial reasons to be licensed as current policy is conflicted. Not allowing vehicles that have been written off for structural reasons under any circumstance. Policy allows both types, if vehicle was licensed at time of accident and that they can continue whilst they pass Council safety checks. Cat S vehicles will no longer be able to be transferred to another driver to allow their continued use or continue to be used if they fail 2 consecutive tests. (Grandfather rights for current licence holder only).
- Introduction of new tyre requirement in line with PSV regulations - tyres must be less than 10 years old if fitted on a licensed vehicle.
- Updated the list of hackney carriage vehicles that will be licensed.

- Increasing the value of both public liability and employee insurance required in line with DfT recommendations.
- Additional checks for private hire operators as per DfT guidance including companies house checks, DVSA licence checks, health and safety. convictions and any non-compliance in respect of drivers and court cases.
- Updated suitability guidance for all licence types together with a fit and proper test for each licence type.
- Change in rehabilitation periods for some convictions - Dishonesty and intent to supply drugs, drink driving periods will reduce, drivers with convictions involving sex, indecency or obscene materials will never be licensed, new sections on public order offences, driver behaviour, exploitation and criminal harassment and regulatory non-compliance and guidance that action can still be taken even if not convicted.
- Introduction of section that covers totting up for driving convictions and rehabilitation period and updating penalty points being considered for suitability / “fit and proper” persons, as they are ‘professional drivers.
- Introduction of a driving test that existing drivers may be asked to pay and undertake if there are concerns regarding the standard of their driving. Course to be completed within a specified period and meet an agreed standard/pass rate.
- Simplifying of section 7 regarding convictions, what the process is, what will be considered and a reminder that it is up to the applicant to prove that they are “fit and proper” not for the Council to prove that they are not. Updated guidance for the decision makers also included.
- The enforcement policy will be moving to an appendix, as a standalone document, which allows it to be updated outside of the policy.