

AGENDA ITEM NO 5

TITLE: PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE NATIONAL INSPECTION STANDARDS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Committee: Licensing Committee

Date: 13th April, 2011

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[K324]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To consider the introduction of the 'National Inspection Standards, A best practice guide', produced by the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Inspection Technical Officer Group, for the inspection of licensed vehicles.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That Members agree to a consultation exercise with the Council's approved garages and private hire and hackney carriage vehicle owners with regard to the proposed introduction of the best practice guide. (Appendix 1)

2.2 To report back to Committee the results of the consultation exercise with a proposal to adopt the 'Hackney Carriage and Private Hire National Inspection Standards, best practice guide'.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 Local Authorities need to be satisfied that the hackney carriages and private hire vehicles operating within their district are safe to do so and ensure that any Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles licensed by the Authority are fit for the purpose of carrying passengers for hire and reward.

3.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables District Councils to make conditions in respect of Hackney Carriages Section 47 (1) and Private Hire Vehicles Section 48 (2).

3.3 The Council's vehicle licence conditions and byelaws require vehicles to undergo an inspection by an authorised garage.

3.4 The Council has powers under Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to require Vehicle Inspections up to three occasions per year, for example, as a result of an enforcement check that brings into question the condition of the vehicle.

- 3.5 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are required by the Council to be inspected by one of the Council's approved garages, prior to receiving a vehicle plate licence.
- 3.6 A hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is inspected prior to the initial grant of the licence and then once every 6 months where a vehicle is over 3 years of age, or on an annual basis, where a vehicle is less than 3 years old.
- 3.7 The inspection carried out by the garages for the purposes of private hire and hackney carriage standards, follows the MOT requirements. There are also additional checks on the bodywork condition and internal condition, as well as, for example additional licence conditions relating to the provision of a first aid kit, no smoking signs and fire extinguisher.
- 3.8 The best practice guide sets out the procedures and standards for those who carry out inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles as well as covering those points laid down in the MOT Inspection Manual for Car and Light Commercial Vehicle Testing, issued by VOSA.
- 3.9 The Department for Transport (DFT), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and the Institute of Licensing, were consulted on the Best Practice Guidance.
- 4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS
- 4.1 The Council has 6 approved vehicle examiners (garages) for hackney carriage and private hire proprietors to take their vehicles to for inspection.
- 4.2 There have been some instances where on inspection of a vehicle by Licensing Officers, conditions noted do not meet standards. On further investigation, it has been clear that the vehicle had recently been presented for inspection at an approved garage, and it is probable that the vehicle was passed with the defect noted. Such examples include damaged bodywork, paintwork, cracked headlights.
- 4.3 Whilst the garages are issued with an inspection sheet to complete, there is currently no documented inspection criteria issued to the garages at present by the Council, that detail the exact standard required for the individual inspection points; particularly with regard to inspection points relating to matters other than MOT requirements.
- 4.4 The introduction of the National Inspection Standards document would help alleviate potential inconsistencies between vehicle examiners and the 6 garages used by the Council.

- 4.5 By having such a document to refer to, it ensures that the inspection standards and pass/fail points are open and transparent to the garages, and vehicle owners themselves.
- 4.6 The document is a useful tool, in that it can be used as reference and a training manual within the garages for the approved inspectors, and can also be used by licensing officers and vehicle owners in the event of a vehicle not meeting criteria.
- 4.7 It is recommended that a 12 week consultation take place with the 6 garages and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle owners for comments with regard to the proposed introduction of the National Inspection Standards document.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 To carry out a consultation exercise with the 6 garages and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle owners, which will be on the Council Web and by post.

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle National Inspection Standards, ‘A best practice guide produced by the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Inspection Technical Officer Group’

To access document on web -

Google web link-

Cut and paste document title as above and click on to top link (agendas.luton.gov.uk/cmiswebpublic/Binary.ashx?Document=19068 .)

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	Room SF209 Location: The Grange, Ely	Mrs Elizabeth Bailey Position: Principal EHO (Commercial) (01353) 665555 E-mail: Elizabeth.Bailey @eastcambs.gov.uk
Taxi and Private Hire Guide, May 2009, version 5.		