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**TITLE: HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE SIGNAGE CONSULTATION**

Committee: Licensing Committee

Date: 9 December 2009

Author: Licensing Officer (Enforcement)

[J254]

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1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To consider the recommendations from the Taxi Trade Consultation Working Party in order that amendments to the Taxi And Private Hire Guide Blue Book can be drafted by the Licensing Enforcement Officer with regard to Roof Sign Standards, Plate Display Standards, Vehicle Colour Standards, Vehicle Markings, Livery and Advertisement Standards.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 For full Committee to approve, amend or reject the following recommendations made by the Taxi Trade Consultation Working Party and to authorise the Licensing Enforcement Officer to draft amendments to the Taxi Condition Booklet in accordance with the decisions made by Licensing Committee:

**2.1.1 Roof Sign Standards For Private Hire Vehicles**

Private Hire Vehicles shall not be allowed to display any form of roof sign.

**2.1.2 Roof Sign Standards For Hackney Carriage Vehicles**

Hackney Carriage Vehicles, should display an illuminated roof sign at all times.

Condition 3.1 should be amended by deleting the final sentence and replacing it with "A Hackney Carriage Vehicle shall carry an illuminated roof sign on the roof. It will carry the single word "TAXI" and shall be visible at the front and rear of the vehicle. No other lettering numbers or symbols to be allowed".

No specific shape or colour of roof sign was determined.

**2.1.3 Plate Display Standards**

(i) That a check on the positioning of licence plates for both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles be carried out at the six monthly and/or annual vehicle test and that the relevant condition be reworded to state that the

plate has to be securely fixed to the exterior of the vehicle and must be clearly legible from behind.

- (ii) Any vehicle not complying when attending for the vehicle test for the Certificate of Compliance will be failed by the vehicle examiner. This would only apply to vehicles, which are currently licensed displaying a licence plate. It would not apply to vehicles being licensed for the first time or where a licence plate has lapsed and been removed from the vehicle. In these cases a licence plate for these vehicles would only be issued after the vehicle had been tested and a Certificate of Compliance had been obtained by the applicant and a full application made to the Council.
- (iii) That the Licence Plate numbering system should be changed to further differentiate between Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. For example licence plate numbers may be preceded by the letter “H” in the case of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and “P” in the case of Private Hire Vehicles.
- (iv) That the Licence Plate number, once issued by the Council, should remain vehicle specific for the life of the vehicle. Where appropriate the number could be reused six months after a licence has not been renewed or when a licence has been surrendered or revoked.

#### **2.1.4 Vehicle Colour Standards**

That there be no introduction of a single or two tone colour to denote a distinction between a Private Hire vehicle or Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

#### **2.1.5 Vehicle Markings - Livery and Advertisements Private Hire Vehicles**

- (i) That Private Hire Vehicles should carry the marking “Advance Bookings Only”
- (ii) That stickers/labels should be carried on the front doors on both sides of Private Hire Vehicles.
- (iii) That the sticker/label should carry the Council Logo, the Licence Plate number, Company name (excluding the words “taxi and cab”) the Company telephone number and “Advance Bookings Only”. The proposed sticker/label is attached as Appendix 1. The vehicle proprietor must purchase the stickers/labels through the Council.

#### **2.1.6 Vehicle Markings – Livery and Advertisements Hackney Carriage Vehicles**

- (i) Hackney Carriages be permitted to retain their individual colours and livery, but that third party adverts would be permitted, subject to the approval of the Council. Should the application be refused and the applicant disagrees with the Councils decision he/she may request a hearing by Committee.

- (ii) Members may wish to decide if livery for Hackney Carriage Vehicles will become compulsory as currently some Hackney Carriages do not display any form of livery and other vehicles do.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 On the 13 May 2009 the Licensing Committee at East Cambridgeshire District Council agreed that a Working Party should be set up, and that a Consultation exercise should be held with the Taxi and Private Hire Trade. The aim of the consultation exercise was to obtain the views and comments with regard to how Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles should be conditioned so that they can be easily distinguishable from one another in East Cambridgeshire.

3.2 Licensing is a public facing service and a review of those conditions relating to vehicle signage standards is required to ensure that robust standards and conditions are in place that apply across the trade.

3.3 In particular, views were sought from the Trade on the following:

Roof Sign Standards  
Plate Display Standards  
Vehicle Colour Standards and  
Vehicle Markings - Livery and advertisement standards.

3.4 Consultation With Taxi Trade

On 21 July 2009 fifty letters and questionnaires were sent out to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade regarding the above standards (detailed in Appendix 2). Twelve replies were received the results are as follows:

#### Roof Signs

1.	Yes 6	No 6
2.	Yes 8	No 4
3.	Yes 8	No 4
4.	Yes 8	No 4

#### Plate Display

1.	Yes 2	No 9	No Comment 1
2.	Yes 0	No 9	No Comment 3
3.	Yes 2	No 8	No Comment 2

### **Vehicle Colour**

1.	H-C	Silver 2	Black 1	Two tone 2	Other 2	No Comment 5
2.	P-H	Silver 1	Black 0	Two Tone 2	Other 4	No Comment 5
3.	1 Year 0	2 Years 1	3 Years 0	4 Years 0	5 Years 5	No Comment 6

### **Vehicle Markings-Livery**

1.	Yes 9	No 2	No Comment 1
2.	Yes 11	No 0	No Comment 1

### **Vehicle Markings-Advertisements**

1.	Yes 8	No 2	No Comment 2
2.	Yes 6	No 4	No Comment 2

#### 3.5 Taxi Trade Consultation Meeting

On the 6 August 2009 a consultation with the taxi trade was held. The minutes of the consultation are attached as Appendix 3.

#### 3.6 Working Party Recommendations

The Working Party met on Wednesday 26 August and the meeting was reconvened on Friday 25 September 2009 to consider the views and input from the taxi trade during the consultation held with them on the 6 August, and the results of the questionnaires sent out on 21 July, in order that recommendations could be made to the Licensing Committee. The minutes of this reconvened meeting are attached as a separate item on the agenda – agenda item 6.

#### 4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Following the Working Party's recommendation in 2.1.5 (iii) regarding Vehicle Markings - Livery and Advertisements in relation to Private Hire Vehicles. It is proposed that the Words "taxi & cab" be excluded, in order to comply with the Condition in section 3(e) page 46 of the Taxi And Private Hire Guide (Blue Book). It is stated in the Condition "not in advertising by signs, printed words, broadcasts or by any other media use the words "Hackney Carriage", "Taxi" or "Taxi Cab" to describe the private hire service he offers". Currently, the Council has thirty-five Private Hire Operators Licences in force, of which, thirteen Companies use the words taxi and/or cab in the Company name. The Private Hire Operators Licence is outside of the scope of the Working Party.

However, due to the above issues in relation to the livery for Private Hire Vehicles, Members may wish to consider recommending a consultation with the Private Hire Operators regarding the removal of the words “Taxi or Cab” from the Company name.

4.2 For the purposes of clarity and enforcement if “taxi or cab” were to form part of the name of the Private Hire Company, ie ABC Taxis, then this name would appear as livery on the Private Hire Vehicle and could mislead members of the public into them believing that the vehicle could be a Hackney Carriage taxi. This approach has been taken by Forest Heath (Appendix 4).

4.3 Members may wish to consider not to allow “taxi or cab” to be used within the Company name in respect of any new or renewal application for a Private Hire Operators Licence.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The cost of the door sticker/labels for private hire vehicles from MOGO will be £6.88 each and in addition to this there will be an approximate cost of generating the separate licence plate number by the Council to be placed on each sticker/label of £3.00 each.

#### 6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Private Hire door sticker/label – Available in paper format

6.2 Appendix 2 – Taxi consultation questionnaire – Available in paper format

6.3 Appendix 3 – [Taxi Trade Consultation meeting minutes 6 August 2009](#)

6.4 Appendix 4 – Excerpts from Forest Heath District Council’s Licensing Conditions Policy – Available in paper format

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#### **Background Documents**

#### **Location**

#### **Contact Officer**

Taxi and Private Hire Guide

Room FF105

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