

# General Licensing Committee



**10<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

Report of **Head of Legal & Democratic Services**

Report No. 23/09

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Wards Affected

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All

## **Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policy**

### ***Recommendations***

*The Committee is requested to consider the draft revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report and to approve it for consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade*

### **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To ask the Committee to consider the proposed revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policy and to approve the draft for consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade.

### **2. Relationship with Corporate Plan**

2.1 The draft policy would satisfy our Corporate Priority of 'Supporting a vibrant local economy' in particular by:

- a) working in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns and
- b) supporting rural businesses and communities

2.2 The draft policy also supports the Corporate Priority of 'Helping to maintain a safe Vale' by:

- a) helping to maintain, or further reduce low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and
- b) reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

2.3 Thirdly, the draft policy is consistent with the priority, 'Rising to the challenge of climate change' by:

a) minimising the impact on the causes of climate change.

### **3. Background**

3.1 The Council has responsibility for licensing hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators.

3.2 In July 2007 the Council's first policy on these matters came into force and this is now due for review. The Licensing Team has prepared a revised draft policy, based on their experiences of working with the current policy and in the light of new legislation and the Department for Transport's existing Best Practice Guidance and current Best Practice Guidance Consultation document.

3.3 The revised draft policy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and a Schedule of Proposed Amendments is attached as Appendix 2, setting out the main proposed amendments and giving an explanation and reasons for them.

### **4. Options**

4.1 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed amendments or suggest appropriate and workable alternatives which would achieve the same aims.

4.2 The following are the most significant proposed changes which the Committee may wish to discuss:-

- Accessibility (paragraph 5.3)
- Air quality (paragraph 5.8.7)
- Disability awareness training (paragraph 6.4.4)
- Frequency of medical examinations (paragraph 6.5.4)

### **5. Consultation**

5.1 Following the Committee's meeting, hackney carriage and private hire businesses, along with other recognised interest groups, will be notified of the consultation and informed that the consultation draft policy will be available on the Council's website and the Abingdon and Wantage Local Services Points. The consultation period will run for six weeks, during which hackney carriage and private hire businesses and drivers will be invited to a meeting to discuss the policy.

5.2 At the end of the consultation period, officers will consider all the comments received and prepare a further report for the Committee in October.

### **6. Financial, legal and any other implications**

6.1 The cost of administering the revised policy once it has been adopted will be met from licensing fees. In making proposals for change, officers have had regard to the likely costs of implementation and have endeavoured to strike an appropriate balance between the financial

interests of the trade, public safety and the delivery of other Council policies. Where the draft policy proposes percentage fee reductions as an incentive, these will be set annually along with all other licensing fees as part of the Council's budget setting process and consideration of any adverse impact on the Council's income.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 The Committee is requested to consider the draft revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report and to approve it for consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade and other recognised interest groups.

### Background Papers:

- 'Department for Transport - Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance, published in November 2006
- Vale of White Horse District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policy, July 2007
- Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance Consultation document, published May 2009