

Agenda Item No:

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 12 October 2017

Report Title: Taxi Licensing Policy

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Portfolio Holder Cllr. G.J. Bradford
Portfolio Holder for: Highways, Wellbeing and Safety



Summary: The purpose of this report is to present to cabinet a final version of Ashford Borough Council's Taxi Licensing Policy for adoption.

The prior version of this policy effectively 'expired' in April 2017. The latest version includes relevant updates and incorporates result from the public consultation period.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- i. Note the outcomes of the public consultation
- ii. Review and agree to the additional changes to the draft policy
- iii. Adopt the revised Taxi Licensing Policy as drafted

Policy Overview: The determination of taxi and private hire driver, operator, and vehicle licence applications is a statutory duty and provides protection to the public ensuring vehicles, operators and drivers are fit and proper for the purposes of providing such services.

Our policy with respects to this subject area guides members of the public, applicants, elected members, and officers on such matters.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications Adjustment to the policy on the relevance of prior convictions has the potential to increase the number of applications refused on grounds that the applicant is not considered 'fit and proper'. This may lead to additional appeals against determinations by the licensing authority.

Equalities Impact Assessment See attached

Other Material Implications: None

Exempt from Publication: **NO**

Background Papers: Taxi Licensing Policy 2012-2017
(available via <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/taxi-licensing-policy>)

Cabinet Report July 2017 - Taxi Licensing Policy

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Report Title:

Taxi Licensing Policy

Introduction and Background

1. A draft Taxi Licensing Policy was agreed at the Cabinet meeting of the 13th July 2017 for the purposes of public consultation.
2. The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet a final draft version of Ashford Borough Council's 'Taxi Licensing Policy 2017-2022' which takes account of the comments made as part of the public consultation.
3. A policy relating to the determination of applications not only guides the decision-maker but also serves to inform an applicant about what they should consider in preparing their application.
4. Furthermore the policy sets out the standards to which the licensing authority will work and provides confidence to the public that the drivers are fit and proper, and that the vehicles are fit for purpose.

Proposal/Current Position

5. Following the closure of the public consultation on the 28th August 2017, and the comments received (see *Appendix A*) the following further changes have been incorporated into the final draft Taxi Licensing Policy
 - Reference made to the Information Commissioners Office with respects to CCTV installed within licensed vehicles
 - Reference made to Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations included with regard to the acceptability of window tints
 - Discrepancy between DBS certificate 'expiry' for operators and drivers corrected, both now read one-month as referenced elsewhere in the draft policy.
 - Terminology for 'wheelchair accessible vehicles', 'wheelchair bound persons', and 'he/she' updated to more appropriate terminology such as 'accessible vehicles', 'wheelchair user', and 'they' or 'them'
 - Inclusion of 'securing wheelchairs', as forming part of the appropriate training for drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles.
 - Clarification that the passenger may not always be the hirer included, for example KCC Schools Contracts.
 - The number of hackney vehicles, private hire vehicles, and number of wheelchair accessible vehicles updated based on current numbers at the time of drafting this report.

- Inclusion of actions to date and planned with reference to the prevention and detection of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
 - General grammatical corrections, formatting, and clarification.
6. At the same time as drafting and consulting on the issue of the policy a number of enquiries have been made with reference to the licensing of rear-only loading wheelchair accessible vehicles. As such and given the nature of the enquiries it was felt prudent to include this aspect within the scope of this report, although disappointingly these enquirers have not commented on the policy consultation despite this suggestion being made.
 7. At current Ashford Borough Council have a policy of only licensing side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles, referencing a letter from the National Taxi Association (NTA) and their reference to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.
 8. Research conducted by the Environmental Protection Licensing Team Leader highlighted that;
 - Canterbury City Council
 - Dartford Borough Council
 - Gravesham Borough Council
 - Medway Council
 - Sevenoaks District Council
 - Shepway District Council
 - Swale Borough Council
 - Thanet District Council
 - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

did not have any restrictions on rear or side loading, and only;

- Maidstone Borough Council
- Dover District Council

were the only Councils to refer to side-only access, by stating that ramps should be available to unload by the nearside passenger door.

9. Tunbridge Wells BC provided additional information to confirm that they used to have such a policy but removed this requirement, as there was insufficient evidence to support its continuation
10. Kent County Council Schools Transport confirmed that they had no restrictions for their schools contracts
11. The Medical Devices Agency, an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, publicise no recommendations relating to side or rear access vehicles within their document '*Guidance on the Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs*'.
12. The NTA advised that they have since dropped the side-only policy introduced by a former chairman, and felt this was a matter for the relevant disability groups. Therefore they do not have any such policy. Whilst the NTA provided

some background information they could not provide evidence to support their prior letter and policy

13. Disability Rights UK confirmed that they do not have a policy on this topic.
14. Access for All (a London centric disability group) advised that they did not have such a policy.
15. Ashford Access also responded on this issue in their consultation response, advising of the need for some rear-access vehicles in terms of providing mobility for those using larger mobility wheelchairs/buggies. They also noted that;
 - Some of the larger wheelchairs cannot fit within a 'black cab'
 - Issues with ramp gradient, for side access vehicles
 - Rear access does not require further wheelchair manoeuvre within the vehicle
 - 'Clamping-in' is safer
 - Facing forward enables conversation and is more comfortable
 - Side access vehicles sometimes use twin parallel ramps creating a sense of insecurity
 - Loading is more time consuming for side access vehicles
 - Side loading can limit the number of spare passenger seats available
 - Rear access vehicles are cheaper and more available, and thus likely to encourage the purchase of wheelchair accessible vehicles within the taxi firms

Full of comments are contained within *Appendix A*.

16. Members of the Taxi Forum were updated with respects to the above comments and research in the August Forum and the only comments received related to locations within the town centre for pick-up. Colleagues from the Parking team were on hand to provide advice on keeping within parking restrictions.
17. It is recognised that both rear and side loading taxis each present their own risks, and that these risks can be mitigated by sensible safe systems of work. Such controls may include loading in safe locations away from corners or main roads, using a hi-vis tabard and cone/triangle, and similar such steps
18. It is also noted that many privately owned wheelchair accessible vehicles and community transport buses are rear loading.
19. In summary, side-loading vehicles have issues with unloading onto narrow pathways or private driveways, and steep ramps. Rear-access vehicles have issues with potentially needing to adjust to load at a rank location, and on with loading from the highway where there is not an alternative option.

20. It is also envisaged that by allowing the use of rear-only loading vehicles, the number of wheelchair vehicles within the fleet may increase as such vehicles are cheaper to purchase and run. As an estimate they are more comparable to a normal saloon car in terms of costs.
21. In light of the information gathered, there appears to be insufficient evidence to justify a continuation of the side-only policy, and insufficient evidence to adequately counter an appeal on refusal to licence a rear-loading wheelchair accessible vehicle.
22. As such the following changes have been incorporated into the relevant sections of the policy;
 - Removal of reference to side-only access vehicles being the only acceptable wheelchair accessible vehicle
 - Inclusion of the reference to rear-only access being permissible where there is the option of a passageway or foldable/removable seats for emergency exit in the event of a rear-end accident
23. Finally it has also been concluded that it would be prudent to ensure that any LPG vehicles within the licensed fleet have been converted by a competent and safe installer, and as such the following requirement has been included in the draft policy;
 - If the vehicle is LPG converted, the vehicle must be registered on the UK LGP register or equivalent to demonstrate that the work was been conducted by a competent and safe installer

Implications and Risk Assessment

24. The update to this policy is not anticipated to have any significant implications.
25. The greatest implication perceived is the potential for more applicants to be refused a license based on the greater emphasis on the relevance of prior convictions. Such refusals or enforcement relating to relevant convictions are subject to the usual rights of appeal through the council or the Magistrates Court. As such it is important to ensure that conviction policies must be justifiable, and the adoption of the LGA example policy assists in ensuring that the requirements are balanced with the need for taxi provision and the need to protect the travelling public from drivers who may not be considered 'fit and proper'
26. The other perceived implication is that the licensing of rear-loading wheelchair accessible vehicles may have a minor impact on the loading of wheelchairs at busy ranks such as the Ashford International Station (domestic) forecourt where rank space is limited. This may in some case involve the repositioning of the vehicle to load, however this is not seen to be a major issue preventing the change in policy. Other larger ranks such as Bank Street, where space for the leading vehicle can be left for loading, are unlikely to be affected,
27. Judicial review is a risk if the policy strays beyond the requirements of the act, or restricts legal activities without due and appropriate cause.

Equalities Impact Assessment

28. The policy will affect all persons involved or affected in a relevant licensable activity in the Borough, irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexuality or age. Recipients of the policy include holders of licences, members of licensing sub-committee, authorities e.g. Kent Police, KCC Schools Transport, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, etc. and all of the Borough's businesses, residents of the borough and those who visit and use local taxi services.
29. An equalities impact assessment is attached as *Appendix B*

Consultation Undertaken

30. The 28 day consultation conducted between 1st August and 28th August, was carried out by means of;
 - A published draft policy (available on website and hard copy on demand) alongside the current policy. This included a summary of the changes.
 - Written invites to comment on the proposals were posted to;
 - i. All Private Hire Drivers
 - ii. All joint Private Hire and Hackney Drivers
 - iii. All Private Hire Operators
 - iv. All Hackney Vehicle Proprietors
 - v. All Private Hire Vehicle Owners
(*Total 392 members of the taxi trade*)
 - vi. Ashford Access Group
 - vii. Kent Police – Op Willow (Child Sexual Exploitation)
 - viii. Kent Police – Licencing
 - ix. Kent County Council Schools Transport
 - x. Kent District and Borough Councils
 - xi. Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

and responses were suggested either by means of letter, email, or online survey.

- An open public/trade drop in session on the morning of 11th August 2017 to discuss the proposals and impacts. As well as advertising the session to the above groups in the consultation letter, specific invites were also emailed to the Taxi Forum trade representatives.
 - It was concluded that we would consider any late responses, however none were received.
31. In addition, our Communications team published a press release on 14th July 2017. We are aware that this resulted an article in the Ashford edition of the Kentish Express (20th July 2017) detailing the upcoming consultation.
 32. The open drop-in session policy session prompted two individuals to attend. One a driver and private hire operator who had no comments or objections to raise, and the other a driver and Taxi Forum rep advised that they would

respond separately as part of the consultation process. No other groups attended.

33. The formal phase of the consultation received responses from;
- 1 taxi driver / Taxi Forum rep
 - Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
 - Kent Police – Operation Willow
 - Kent Police – Licensing (Ashford)
 - Ashford Access
 - Kent County Council Schools Transport

Other Options Considered

34. It is recognised by the Department for Transport that it is for local authorities to reach their own decisions on overall policies and on individual licensing matters.
35. There are as always a number of options available to councils with respects to taxi licensing these include placing further restrictions or requirements that are deemed necessary for the purposes of taxi licensing.
36. It is felt that the options considered are appropriate to the borough, and that further restriction or control will not further the objectives of the Council with respects to taxi licensing at the current time.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

37. The revisions to the policy mainly relate to legislative changes and seek to clarify some aspects of the original policy. These changes are supported for the purposes of ensuring that our policy remains relevant, accurate, and adds value to the licensing regime.
38. The inclusion of the updated relevance of criminal convictions, provides a greater level of protection for potentially vulnerable members of society from those with prior convictions for serious criminal offences
39. The other main change relates to the removal of the side-only wheelchair accessible vehicle policy, as there is insufficient evidence to justify its continuation and leaves the authority open to viable challenge through an appeal to the Courts.
40. Overall this approach is recommended to ensure that the policy remains up to date, and can be effectively applied by the council, officers, applicants, and the general public.

Next Steps in Process

41. Once the revised policy has been adopted, it will be made available on the licensing pages of the www.ashford.gov.uk and used immediately by Officers for decision-making purposes.

42. The final policy will be subject to review after five years, along with any periodic review brought about by changes in the Council's approach, or change to relevant legislation

Conclusion

43. In summary a licensing policy would be unlawful if it gave the impression that it could dictate the contents of an application and give the impression that the Council would assess and exercise substantive discretionary powers in relation to all applications, unless there are relevant representations and the decision taking function is permitted under the authority of the Act. Ashford Borough Council's policy was originally reviewed by Counsel on this basis and has been updated accordingly.
44. Revisions have been made to sections of the policy based on associated legislation updates, need to protect the general public, and need to provide clarity on ambiguous points in the prior policy,

Portfolio Holder's Views

45. "I support the final draft of this policy which adds clarity over the prior policy, provides protection to vulnerable members of society, and removes unnecessary burden on the trade" - Councillor G.J. Bradford

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Appendix A: Consultation responses

Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix C: Final draft – Taxi Licensing Policy 2017-2022

Please note

A copy of the current Taxi Licensing Policy 2012-2017 is available via;
<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/taxi-licensing-policy>

Appendix A
Consultation responses

Respondent	Comment	Officer Commentary
KCC Schools Transport	<i>5.7.1/2/3 Kent CC requires drivers and vehicles operating on its contracts to wear/display badges/plates regardless whether an exemption has been given by the Licensing Authority.</i>	Noted. It is unlikely that the executive vehicles that have been granted exemption will be contracted for schools transport work, however KCC can place their own contract requirements above and beyond the licensing requirements, so long as the operator complies with the licensing conditions applicable to them.
	<i>5.8.3 Given the legal demands on any individual or organisation using CCTV, rather than just ensuring the system conforms to the DPA, it might be beneficial to reference legislation and guidance issued by the ICO</i>	Noted and draft policy updated.
	<i>6.2.1 Might the wording be clarified, perhaps in a similar fashion to App A 2.1/3.2</i>	Agreed, and draft policy wording now clarified.
	<i>6.7.5 App D 1.5 point 10 should perhaps stipulate five years continuous residence</i>	Noted, and clarified that the 'good conduct' certificate is for the last 5 years, if the applicant has lived outside of the UK during this period.
	<i>6.11.2 Is it correctly understood that the PH driver's conditions supersede the Council's byelaws in this situation?</i>	Correct.
	<i>7.2.1 Currency of a DBS check for an Operator's Licence (3 months) differs from the currency of a DBS check for a driver's licence (1 month) (App D 1.5 point 9) and currency is not referenced in relation to renewal of a drivers licence (App D 3.1 point 6). It may be beneficial to consider the facility afforded by the DBS online update service.</i>	Discrepancy between licence types updated so both read 1 month, and updated service now mentioned.
	<i>1.13.1 final line – replace 'should' with 'must'?</i>	Noted, and clarified in draft policy.
	<i>1.18 The use of any additional tints on glass is of concern to Kent CC although it is accepted that, in the absence of specialist equipment, it isn't possible to determine specifics in relation to light transmissivity and any testing with therefore be subjective. Including a reference to The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regs 1986 may be beneficial. Anecdotally, it is understood that some insurance companies require to be</i>	Noted, reference included in draft policy.

	<i>notified of additional tint being applied as it can be considered to be a vehicle modification.</i>	
	<i>1.21 Might be more appropriately entitled 'Mobility Access' or 'Accessible Vehicles' as the text relates only to passengers who have a physical disability</i>	Draft policy terminology updated.
	<i>1.21.4 The determination of what constitutes 'sufficient' training is open to interpretation and the training requirement should include securing wheelchairs and passengers in the vehicle. The term 'wheelchair bound passengers' is perhaps better expressed as 'wheelchair users'.</i>	Noted and terminology updated in draft policy.
	<i>App A 2.2 Kent CC may engage under contract a HC vehicle to convey a client from a point outside the Borough. It might be helpful to reference that the hirer will not always be the passenger.</i>	Noted and clarified in draft policy.
	<i>App A 2.5 'issued with a device'</i>	Noted, spelling corrected.
	<i>App A 3.1 It is understood that, across the County, a number of PH drivers operate 'London style' black cabs as they afford easy access for wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments. Any restriction on PH drivers using such vehicles is likely to restrict the ability of Kent CC to secure suitable transport for its clients.</i>	Concerns noted, however we are aware that there are plenty of alternate suitable vehicles available for private hire use that are not black cab type. Many of which are much cheaper to purchase for the operators. Ashford BC currently license two 'black cabs' as hackney vehicles, and note that the LTI cabs are not necessarily first choice. Most wheelchair accessible vehicles are other makes.
	<i>App A 3.5 point 2 and App I 2.2 point 3 Kent CC does not issue such signs and does not require PH/HC vehicles to display them</i>	Noted, however the ability to display KCC signs if later required has been retained should KCC consider this appropriate in future.
	<i>Throughout – it may be preferable to replace 'his' and 'him' with a gender non-specific pronoun, ie 'their' or 'them'</i>	Noted, draft policy updated accordingly.
Ashford Access	<i>It is good to know that all newly licensed Cabs must be fully accessible and that there are regular health checks for drivers.</i>	Noted.
	<i>With regard to the licensing of rear access vehicles as Taxis or Private Hire, we consider that there is a need for some Licensed vehicles of this type to be available. Many profoundly disabled people rely on quite sizable electric 'buggies' which could not be accommodated in the usual Black Cab style taxi.</i>	Noted, and incorporated into draft policy by removing restriction on rear-only loading wheelchair accessible vehicles. It is hoped that this will encourage additional wheelchair accessible vehicles, and increase variety allowing the larger mobility devices to be accommodated.

	<i>With regard to the normal black cab driver assistance may be needed because of the gradient of the ramp to enter a Cab.</i>	Noted. Drivers of listed wheelchair vehicles are required to provide assistance under the Equalities Act. This has been clarified in the draft policy.
	<i>Access to new stretch celebration-style vehicles should be possible, with the provision of clamps for a wheelchair for someone unable to transfer to normal seat.</i>	Noted and covered in vehicle standards.
	<i>There is a need to make clear to the public the difference between Taxi and Private Hire services and what can be expected in the way of access and assistance, Perhaps private hire call centres should be encouraged to enquire if the passenger has any mobility problems, or will be using a wheelchair, at the time of booking.</i>	Noted. Details of wheelchair accessible vehicles are available on the ABC website. Although we would expect a passenger to highlight if they need a larger or wheelchair accessible vehicle, we would welcome any Ashford Access involvement at our next Taxi Forum to encourage private hire firms to provide greater assistance to users who may require such assistance.
	<i>In the past there have been occasions where the driver has not been willing to load a chair due to a painful back or the danger of damage to the vehicle</i>	Currently no drivers are exempted (with appropriate certificate) from the duties to assist under the Equalities Act on medical grounds. As such, we would welcome any such incidents to be reported to the Licensing Team for investigation.
	<i>It should be remembered that not all disabilities are visible and sometimes patience is called for.</i>	Noted.
	<i>We feel it would be helpful if a short disability questionnaire, or similar, is included in the 3 yearly driver test (medical)</i>	Unfortunately the 3 year medical is a standard assessment conducted by any appropriately qualified and registered GP, and as such it is not possible to incorporate ABC specific training within this assessment.
	<i>It would be helpful if there was a brief leaflet, for immediate distribution, giving basic guidance to drivers, particularly important when assisting the blind is considered. There is a recommended way to offer assistance, but all too often it happens that the blind person is held and guided firmly, with little communication. This is the direct opposite of the recommended actions.</i>	Along with accessibility details in the application packs and at verbal tests, we currently provide the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association's top tips leaflet in all driver application and renewal packs. This leaflet has also been distributed via the Taxi Forum meeting.
	<i>I have it on authority that guide dogs have occasionally been refused and once the guide dog was not permitted into the footwell in the front as the driver was very anxious about dogs. There is also the question of attempt to charge for the dog. There are now assistance dogs for many conditions and it should be made clear that all such dogs must be carried. Such an animal normally wears a distinguishing tabard.</i>	As above, accessibility features in the application pack, and verbal tests, with particular reference to assistance dogs. We have no medically exempt drivers, so there should currently be no refusals, and no additional charges for the carriage of assistance dogs. In addition, during the early part of 2017 we conducted some mystery shopper exercises in association with the Guide Dogs Association, which

		were on the whole positive. We intend to repeat such exercises on occasion, and would highlight the need for any refusals to be reported for investigation by the Licensing Team.
	<i>The taxi ranks seem adequate, though a drop off in town centre for disabled passengers would be an advantage</i>	Noted and referred to Parking colleagues to consider whether there is a need and whether viable.
	<i>CCTV seems to be advisable for drivers and passengers alike</i>	Noted and agreed.
	<i>While the above comments are general observations, we fully expect that any and all changes in related legislation will be implemented promptly.</i>	Noted and agreed.
	<p><u>Advantages of rear loading</u> <i>The ramp is less steep and is invariably a single one. Possible to drive straight in without further manoeuvre. Facing forward enables conversation with other passengers and is more comfortable. Clamping-in is safer.</i></p> <p><u>Disadvantages of side loading</u> <i>Sometimes there are twin parallel ramps which create a sense of insecurity. Often require a 90 degree turn to get into position? Loading is more time consuming; important when in busy thoroughfare. Reduction in numbers of fellow passengers.</i></p>	Noted
	<i>(rear loading) are more readily available and as a consequence are likely to be less expensive thus offering encouragement to taxi drivers/firms to invest in them, which in turn would be advantageous to people with disabilities.</i>	Noted
	<i>Both forms impose a degree of risk by having to either go onto the highway in the case of rear loading and being part of a line of taxis, or to interfere with pedestrians using the pavement whilst loading and unloading from the side.</i>	Noted
1x Driver/Taxi Forum Rep	In relation to the proposal to include details of the existing wheelchair accessible vehicle list, in accordance with the Equalities Act, the comments received were;	Details of contact numbers are provided as part of vehicle application process and printed in the wheelchair accessible vehicle list. This assists wheelchair users in booking suitable taxis.

	<p><i>'Wording to be added to inform the public not to ring 24/7'</i></p>	<p>We are aware that some drivers may use one phone for personal and business use, and may not wish to be disturbed when not working. For that purpose we are able to add contact times, if provided by the licensee, and include on the wheelchair accessible vehicle list, however this addition is not considered to be an issue of policy and therefore outside of the remit of the amended policy.</p>
	<p>In relation to clarifying the current policy of side-only loading wheelchair accessible vehicles, and addition of <i>'Applicants wishing to licence vehicles outside of this policy should show sufficient reason for the Council to deviate from agreed policy'</i> the comments received were;</p> <p><i>'What is the change? There is no clarification, What am I voting on? Given that we are supposed to be voting on a system that has been deemed unsafe by ROSPA and various disabled groups'</i></p>	<p>This proposal has been superseded by review of the current side-only wheelchair loading policy, and is detailed in the main body of the cabinet report</p>
	<p>In relation to the proposed change to clarify that PSV/HGV licence holders are exempt from medical requirements where they hold a current medical, to, state that, they will not be exempt from the council's medical requirements, the comments received were;</p> <p><i>'It was agreed that HGV & PSV medicals will be honoured providing they have 2 years and 9 months to run from the date of the intended hackney medical'</i></p>	<p>This proposed change seeks to ensure that drivers who are licensed do not drive for extended periods without a relevant medical having been conducted, for example licencing a driver for three years with only one year of a current medical being left to run.</p> <p>As such we would expect that any medical would be 'current' and run for the duration of the licence. This of course would be applied with a suitable level of discretion, for example if the applicant has a recent medical within the last few months of making a taxi application. This discretion appears reasonable, and prevents the need for a driver obtain multiple medical certificates for associated driving careers which could be considered unreasonable.</p>
	<p>In relation to the number of hackney carriages and percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles, comments received were;</p> <p><i>'The figure of 100 appears incorrect'</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>'which year is this 22% increase calculated from'</i></p> <p>in relation to percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles.</p>	<p>Both of these figures provided in the final version of the draft policy have been updated based on current licensing data.</p>

	<p>Additional comments were received with respects to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing details of individual licence application decisions relating to wheelchair accessible vehicles 	<p>These comments are outside of the scope of the policy, and the need to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with reference to current policy and guidance, has been provided to the respondent.</p>
	<p>Additional comments were received with respects to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to pick up blue badge holders in the town centre • The removal of raised kerbs • Customer advice for ranks only used during shopping hours (i.e. Park Mall) • The size of the South Eastern owned and managed station rank • Daytime ranks do not serve the town centre • The Bank Street rank has excessive gaps between customers/pickups. • Where does the Council consider it safe to unload using rear access ramps in the town centre • Limitation on the numbers of hackney carriages 	<p>In general, these issues are matters not directly relating to the licensing policy, but instead relate to the interaction of the taxi trade with highways and parking planning. These issues are generally more relevant for the Taxi Forum, and as such the respondent has been advised to raise the issues within that forum.</p> <p>A meeting has occurred with South Eastern and the respondent with reference to the South Eastern owned and operated station rank.</p> <p>Finally, the issue of a limitation on the number of hackney carriages is a matter of licensing policy, however at current no evidence has been provided through the taxi forum of 'no unmet demand', nor other requests for the application of such a limitation. I would again recommend that such issue be raised through the Taxi Forum for further discussion with a cross section of the licensed trade. This would require full trade support as it will have likely cost implications and implications restricting business growth. Should this matter become relevant then a further report can be presented to cabinet on the matter of limitations on taxi numbers. Such report would require significant evidence, including assessments by an appropriate external consultancies, and therefore would not viable to include in the current policy amendments.</p>
<p>Kent Police Op Willow</p>	<p><i>Thank you for sending me the taxi licensing policy. I have looked at it and think this is an excellent opportunity to mandate the training of taxi drivers in Child Sexual Exploitation / Human Trafficking Awareness. I suggest that all new drivers should receive such training before being granted a licence, and all existing licence holders receive annual refresher training. This would allow your department to 'police' licence holders, and withdraw licences from anyone found to be engaging in CSE / trafficking activity. At the present training is voluntary, and any culprit could claim that they had not been trained and did not therefore understand the subject or what their responsibilities are. Mandating the training would take away this excuse and</i></p>	<p>The proactive measures taken by Ashford's Licensing Team with respects to CSE were not included in the original proposals and for that purpose have been included in a specific section of the final version to advise of the actions taken to date.</p> <p>We have also included the ongoing actions planned to help protect this vulnerable group. This includes mandatory questions at the verbal test for all new drivers, alongside the use of suitable training media.</p> <p>In addition, we plan to hold further training for existing drivers at suitable intervals.</p>

	<p><i>allow your authority to get rid of anyone who was engaging in unlawful activity. I am happy to liaise with you to ensure that some form of training is delivered,, and we could issue certificates once training has been completed.</i></p>	<p>These elements have been included in the final draft.</p>
<p>Guide Dogs for the Blind Association</p>	<p><i>Last year I sent you a template policy on the carriage of assistance dogs in taxis and PHVs. This policy, created in consultation with the Local Government Association, suggested ways that licencing authorities could introduce best practice to help avoid assistance dog owners being refused access by taxi and PHV drivers. We produced this policy as unfortunately our 2016 survey found access refusals to be a significant problem with 42% of assistance dog owners having been refused access to a taxi or PHV in the last year.</i></p> <p><i>I understand that you have already, or were in the process of, adopting part of our policy. I was hoping to find out which aspects you had implemented? And what impact this has had?</i></p> <p><i>In the meantime, please find attached our newly updated policy on this issue.</i></p>	<p>Whilst the response has not elicited specific comment on the content of our policy, suitable elements of the Guide Dogs policy has been incorporated into the ABC policy.</p> <p>In addition, we can confirm that in early 2017 we conducted a mystery shopper exercise in conjunction with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, which resulted in zero refusals. We plan to repeat such exercises at suitable intervals, alongside general and wheelchair accessibility exercises</p>
<p>Kent Police (Licensing)</p>	<p><i>Thank you for sending this across to us. Having read through the document we have no specific comments to make other than to say that we support any strengthening of checks to ensure the public are protected from those who could be inclined to abuse such a position of trust.</i></p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a

policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.

- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

Lead officer:	Trevor Ford
Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Revision of the Taxi Licensing Policy
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	12 October 2017
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The report seeks to approve a final draft of the Taxi Licensing Policy, following revisions made as part of the public consultation. These revisions include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated number of hackney vehicles, private hire vehicles, and wheelchair accessible vehicles • Inclusions of actions taken to take child sexual exploitation (CSE) • Inclusion of actions planned for the prevention of CSE • Grammatical/formatting errors • Removal of the side-only wheelchair accessible vehicles policy <p>The aim of the update this to provide a current policy with modifications to ensure that the guidance within remains up to date and effective for the purposes of the policy.</p> <p>It is expected that members of the general public may be affected by the policy by means of access local taxi services. Businesses providing such services will also be affected as to our general approach and amendments to the relevance of prior convictions.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>Research conducted as part of the revision of the policy includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated case law • Best practice guidance • General taxi licensing research • Liaison with taxi and private hire drivers and operators via the Ashford Taxi Forum • Mystery shopper activity regarding guide dogs being allowed in vehicles • Research with disability groups, taxi groups, other licensing authorities etc. on accessible vehicles

<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>Public consultation (28 day) has occurred, consisting of a policy drop-in session as well as a more formal consultation. See report for further details.</p> <p>Results included some minor changes, and also an unforeseen change with respects to rear/side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles, which elicited some further research and further consultation with relevant groups. See report for further details</p> <p>Consultation analysis did not reveal differing views between protected characteristics</p> <p>In conclusion, the decision is expected to have a positive effect on equality</p>
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Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u>		
Elderly	Low	Positive - minor
Middle age	Low	Positive – minor
Young adult	Low	Positive – minor
Children	Medium	Positive - minor
<u>DISABILITY</u>		
Physical	High	Positive - Major
Mental	Medium	Positive - minor
Sensory	Medium	Positive - minor
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	Low	Neutral

<u>RACE</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>SEX</u>		Neutral
Men	Low	
Women	Low	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	Low	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	N/A
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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?	
Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide , alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance .	
Aim	Yes/No
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any 	<p>The legislative provisions relevant to this policy provides for the protection of children, access by wheelchair users and other disability groups, and suitability of the drivers/operators to operate.</p> <p>The changes as part of the updated policy are not considered to have any negative impacts on equality.</p> <p>Monitoring of the policy will be undertaken formally after five years, but will be subject to informal review as and when relevant applications are received and the policy is applied. Review may also be required should there be any change in legislation or a particular urge to change Council policy during the lifetime of the document. In addition the council's revised policy register will assist the service to meet this</p>
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<p>residual impacts are justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?	
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>29th August 2017.</p>

Taxi Licensing Policy

2017 - 2022



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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This policy contains information about legal requirements, government guidance, Council policy, procedures and standards relevant to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

2. Definitions

Throughout this document:

- “The Council” or “The Authority” means Ashford Borough Council
- “Vehicle” or “Licensed Vehicle” means both a hackney carriage and private hire vehicle
- “Hackney carriage” means a vehicle licensed under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to ply for hire throughout the district controlled by the Council
- “Private hire vehicle” means a vehicle licensed under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to carry passengers for hire or reward by prior booking
- “Private hire operator” means a person who makes provision for the acceptance of private hire bookings to undertake themselves or pass to others to undertake
- “The DfT” means the Department for Transport, including previous names under which that Department has been known
- “The DfT Guidance” means The Department for Transport - Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance, published in March 2010
- “The Committee” will mean the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee of the Council
- The word “Taxi” has no meaning in law and is often used generically to describe both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles
- The term “DVLA driving licence” means a full original GB driving licence issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

3. Background

3.1 Role of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles

3.1.1 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles have a specific role to play in an integrated transport system. They are able to provide services in situations where public transport is either not available (for example in rural areas, or outside “normal” hours of operation such as in the evenings or on Sundays), and/or for those with mobility difficulties.

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The aim of licensing the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle trade is, primarily, to protect the public as well as to ensure that the public have reasonable access to these services, because of the part they play in local transport provision. It is important that the Council’s hackney carriage and private hire licensing powers are used to ensure that licensed vehicles in the district are safe, comfortable, properly insured and available where and when required. The hackney carriage and private hire industry within the Council’s area is fairly comprehensive and provides its population with a reasonable service. This policy builds on the industry’s existing strengths and on the 2012 policy.

3.3 Licensing Profile

3.3.1 The Council currently licenses 100 hackney carriages and 97 private hire vehicles. There are 360 private hire and joint private hire/hackney drivers licensed by the Council.

3.4 Review of Policies & Practices

3.4.1 The Council has responsibility for licensing hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators within the borough of Ashford.

3.4.2 This guidance sets out what is considered to be best practice in terms of hackney carriage and private hire licensing. It does not seek to cover the whole range of possible licensing requirements. Instead it seeks to concentrate only on those issues that have caused difficulty in the past or that seem of particular significance.

3.5 Best Practice Guidance & Legislation

3.5.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) has national responsibility for hackney carriage and private hire legislation in England and Wales.

- 3.5.2 In 2006 the DfT produced a Best Practice Guidance to assist local authorities with the regulation of the hackney carriage and private hire trades. It was directed at local authorities in England and Wales to “decide for themselves the extent to which they wish to make use of it or adapt it to suit their own purposes”. There was recognition, within the document, that it is for individual licensing authorities to reach their own decisions both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters, in the light of their own views of the relevant considerations.
- 3.5.3 In 2010 the DfT’s Guidance was updated and this policy revision takes the 2010 version in to account.
- 3.5.4 This document also takes account of the legislative basis of the Council’s taxi licensing powers, contained in the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended.
- 3.5.5 Other guidance, such as that associated with legislative amendments under the Equalities Act 2010 and Immigration Act 2016 have been taken into account. This is in addition to other good practice guidance such as the Local Government Association guidance on the relevant of criminal convictions and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association guidance on taxi access for the visually impaired.

3.6 Costs and Benefits of Licensing Policies

- 3.6.1 The Guidance stresses that licensing requirements that are unduly stringent are likely to unreasonably restrict the supply of hackney carriage and private hire services, by increasing the cost of operation or by otherwise restricting entry to the trade. Licensing authorities are, therefore, cautioned to recognise that too restrictive an approach may well work against the public interest and can have safety implications.
- 3.6.2 Licensing authorities are encouraged to ensure that each of their various licensing requirements is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address. The financial or other cost of a particular requirement, in terms of its effect on the availability of transport to the public, should at least be matched by the benefit it will provide to the public, for example, through increased safety.

4. Introduction

4.1 Powers and Duties

4.1.1 This revised statement of licensing policy has been produced pursuant to the powers conferred by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended, which places on the Council the duty to carry out its licensing functions in respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

4.1.2 The aim of the licensing process is to regulate the hackney carriage and private hire trade in order to promote well-run and responsible businesses that display sensitivity to the wishes and needs of the general public.

4.2 Policy Status

4.2.1 In exercising its discretion in carrying out regulatory functions, the Council will have regard to this policy document.

4.2.2 Notwithstanding the existence of this policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits. Where it is necessary for the Council to depart substantially from its policy, clear and compelling reasons will be given for so doing.

4.2.3 This policy (and associated work procedures) will provide those Council Officers who are required to administer the licensing function with appropriate guidelines within which to act. The Council may need to consider applications outside the policy.

4.2.4 This policy took effect on **TBC** and will remain in existence for a period of five years, during which it shall be kept under review and revised as appropriate.

5. Vehicles - (Hackney Carriage & Private Hire)

Limitation of Numbers

5.1.1 No powers exist for licensing authorities to limit the number of private hire vehicles that they licence. The present legal provisions on quantity restrictions for hackney carriage vehicles are set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a hackney carriage licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed hackney carriages "if, but only if, the local authority is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is

unmet". In the event of a challenge to a decision to refuse a licence on these grounds, it would, therefore, have to be established that the Council had been reasonably satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand.

- 5.1.2 Many Councils do not impose any quantity restrictions on hackney vehicles and the DfT regards this as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed, licensing authorities are urged to regularly reconsider the matter, taking into account whether the restrictions should continue at all. It is suggested that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of those who use the services of such vehicles.
- 5.1.3 Where quantity restrictions are imposed, vehicle licence plates command a premium, often of thousands of pounds. This tends to suggest that there are people who want to enter the market and provide a service to the public, but who are being prevented from doing so by the quantity restrictions.
- 5.1.4 If the Council were to take the view that a quantity restriction can be justified in principle, the Guidance advises that the level at which the limit should be set is addressed by means of a survey.
- 5.1.5 The Council does not intend to set a limit on the number of hackney carriages that it licences, since no evidence has been provided of any difficulty arising from this stance. However, all new licences are issued to wheelchair accessible vehicles only.

5.2 Specifications and Conditions

- 5.2.1 Local authorities have a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can licence as hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.
- 5.2.2 The DfT Guidance suggests that best practice is for local licensing authorities to adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicle as possible. Authorities are encouraged to leave it open to the trade to put forward vehicles of their own choice, which can be shown to meet basic criteria. In that way, emerging new designs for vehicles can be readily taken into account.
- 5.2.3 Licensing authorities are asked to be particularly cautious about specifying only purpose-built hackney carriages, with the strict constraint on supply that that implies. Councils are however encouraged to make use of the "type approval" rules within any specifications they determine this is explained in more detail elsewhere in this policy.

5.2.4 The Council is empowered to impose such conditions, as it considers reasonably necessary, in relation to the grant of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence. Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles provide a service to the public, so it is appropriate to set criteria for the external and internal condition of the vehicle, provided that these are not unreasonably onerous. The council has adopted minimum standards as set out in Appendix A, which it will normally apply in respect of all licensed vehicles.

5.2.5 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. Purpose built vehicles are amongst those, which the Council will licence only as hackney carriages in view of the possible confusion in the minds of the travelling public between the two types of vehicle.

5.3 Accessibility

5.3.1 The Government is committed to an accessible public transport system in which disabled people have the same opportunities to travel as other members of society. While the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and the Equalities Act 2010 allow regulations to set standards for wheelchair accessible taxis.

5.3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act and Equalities Act places certain duties on licensed drivers to provide assistance to people in wheelchairs, to carry them safely and not to charge extra for doing so. Failure to abide by these duties could lead to prosecution and a maximum fine of £1,000.

5.3.3 A list of all wheelchair accessible vehicles will be maintained in accordance with section 167 of the Equalities Act 2010 on the licensing team webpage. This will place a duty on the drivers of the listed vehicles to comply with the requirements under section 165 of said Act. This list will be periodically updated based on the details given at the time of vehicle licensing.

5.3.4 Since the introduction of new granting hackney carriage vehicle licences to wheelchair accessible vehicles, the current proportion of such vehicles stands at 18% (not including wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles).

5.3.5 Until further regulations are introduced, it will remain for individual licensing authorities to determine their accessibility policies in consultation with the local trade and disabled people.

5.3.6 It is arguable that different accessibility considerations should apply as between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in that customers dealing directly with the driver can hire hackney carriages on the spot, whereas private hire vehicles can only be booked through an operator. It is considered particularly important that a disabled person should be able to hire a hackney carriage on the spot with the minimum of delay or inconvenience and having accessible hackney carriage vehicles available helps make that possible.

5.3.7 The policy set out at 5.1.5 above in respect of the limitation on numbers, is specifically designed to encourage new taxis to be accessible in that every new hackney vehicle license plate issued must be wheelchair accessible. Any requirements to provide such access for private hire vehicles are considered less appropriate and in this case private hire operators will simply be encouraged to offer accessible vehicles within their fleet. The Vehicle Specification at Appendix A indicates what is to be required in respect of wheelchair access for those vehicles which have been adapted or constructed for this purpose.

5.4 Maximum Age of Vehicles

5.4.1 The Council has an age restriction on licensed vehicles, (see Appendix A), but all applications for the licensing of vehicles will be treated on its individual merit however the following conditions have been placed on the licensing of vehicles. Applicants wishing to licence vehicles outside of this policy should show sufficient reason for the Council to deviate from agreed policy.

5.5 Vehicle Testing

5.5.1 No vehicle may be used as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle unless it has been given a certificate of compliance in respect of a satisfactory test, and the Council has appropriately licensed it. Responsibility for ensuring the vehicle is tested and licensed remains with the licence holder. These inspections are to be carried out by a garage appointed by Ashford Borough Council.

5.6 Signage & Advertising

5.6.1 Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with hackney carriages, without realising that private hire vehicles are not available for immediate hire or able to be hailed in the street. It is, therefore, important that the public are able to easily distinguish each type of vehicle.

5.6.2 It is possible to prohibit private hire vehicles from displaying any identification at all apart from the Council's licence plate or disc. Some

clearer identification is, however, seen as best practice. This is for two reasons: firstly, to ensure a more positive statement that the vehicle cannot be hired immediately through the driver, and secondly because it is quite reasonable (and in the interests of the travelling public) for a private hire vehicle operator to be able to state on the vehicle the contact details for hiring.

- 5.6.3 What is permitted, or indeed prohibited, to be displayed on either hackney or private hire vehicles in a particular borough tends to be a controversial area of licensing controls with little or no apparent consensus between licensing authorities.
- 5.6.4 Within the Council's area, both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are required to display a licence plate on the rear of the vehicle and the plates are different colours to distinguish one type from another. This is a key feature in helping to identify vehicles that are properly licensed.
- 5.6.5 In view of the above details, all hackney carriages licensed by the Council must carry illuminated roof-mounted sign indicating they are a taxi and these must be lit when plying for trade. In order to differentiate between the two types of licensed vehicle, private hire vehicles must not carry roof-mounted signs of any kind, and they must have no signs (roof-mounted or otherwise) using the words "Taxi", "Hackney", "Cab", or "For Hire".
- 5.6.6 Limited advertising giving details concerning the proprietor's or operator's private hire business will be permitted, but this will be strictly controlled so that confusion between private hire and hackney carriage vehicle is kept to the minimum.
- 5.6.7 Private hire vehicles in the borough are permitted to display signs that indicate that they are for private hire only and are not insured for other uses.
- 5.6.8 Private hire vehicles are permitted restricted first party advertising subject to the following restrictions:
- the advertising material shall be restricted to the metal surface of the drivers and front passengers' doors. If advertising material is to be displayed, it must include the words "ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY" OR "PRIVATE HIRE ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY". It can include the proprietor's company name, logo, website, email address or telephone number
 - the advertising material shall not contain the words "TAXI", "HACKNEY", "CAB" or "FOR HIRE". This restriction includes the

use of these words within the proprietor's company name, log, website or email address

- the advertising material shall be non-reflective
- nothing shall be advertised which might reasonably cause offence to members of the public
- requests to allow third party advertising will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as will any signage related to accredited awards for best practice and membership of professional organisations

5.6.9 Private hire vehicles are not permitted to display on the outside or inside of the vehicle in such a manner to be conspicuous from the outside any other signs, telephone numbers or other advertising material.

5.6.10 The Council reserves the right to require that any advertisement it deems unsuitable be removed forthwith.

5.6.11 Full livery third party advertising if desired is permitted on hackney carriage vehicles in the Borough. This is subject to the following conditions:

- Nothing shall be advertised which might cause reasonable offence to members of the public
- The Council reserves the right to require that any advertisement it deems unsuitable be removed forthwith

5.7 Exemption from displaying plates

5.7.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires that private hire vehicles and drivers display the relevant licence plate and badge issued by the Council at all times. The same legislation also permits a Council to exempt the display of licence plates and, where that exemption applies, the requirement to wear a private hire driver's badges does not apply.

5.7.2 The open display of these identifying plates and badges is important in terms of protecting both the public and the taxi trade. However, there are limited occasions when the display of such identification may have the opposite effect both in terms of customer safety and commercial implications for the operating business. The operation of chauffeured, executive and limousine vehicles is a case in point. Identification of the vehicle as a licensed vehicle may allow "high risk" passengers to be more readily targeted putting both them and the driver at risk. The

display of the Council's licence plates externally may also deter some customers from using the service.

5.7.3 It is not intended that all private hire vehicles should have access to this exemption. Only a small minority operating the type of service described above. To that end it is only considered appropriate to consider issue of exemption notices where the following requirements are met:

- The vehicle to be exempted is of a high quality both in terms of brand and condition
- Vehicles will normally be the accepted luxury brands such as Mercedes Benz, BMW, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Bentley and Lexus. The highest specification executive type cars from other manufacturers may also be considered
- Vehicles will display a disc, issued by the Council, in the front windscreen
- The vehicle must have no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim

5.8 Security & Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

5.8.1 The DfT Best Practice Guidance recommends licensing authorities look sympathetically on the installation of security measures, such as a screen between driver and passengers or CCTV systems as a means of providing some protection for vehicle drivers.

5.8.2 The Council will not require enhanced security or CCTV measures in vehicles as it is considered that they are best left to the judgment of the owners and drivers themselves. The hackney carriage and private hire vehicle trades are, however, encouraged to build good links with the local police force, including participation in any Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

5.8.3 If CCTV facilities are installed in a licensed vehicle, the proprietor will be responsible for ensuring the system conforms to the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation, and displays the necessary informative notice for passengers. We would also recommend attention be paid to guidance issued by the Information Commissioners Office with reference to CCTV installations and data retention.

5.9 Application Procedures

5.9.1 The Council requires that applications must be made on a specified application form in accordance with the application procedure set out in Appendix B.

5.10 Consideration of Applications

5.10.1 The Council will consider all applications on their own merits once it is satisfied that the appropriate criteria have been met and the application form and supporting documents are complete.

5.11 Grant and Renewal of Licences

5.11.1 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences will be granted for 12 months. However, a licence may be granted for a shorter period, should this be appropriate in the circumstances.

5.11.2 Council Officers will send a reminder letter to the current taxi proprietor or operator two months before the existing licence expires in order to assist applicants in their prompt submission of re-licensing applications, but the responsibility to ensure a vehicle is licensed remains with the proprietor or operator.

5.11.3 Officers may only accept complete applications comprising of all the necessary paperwork. If an application is received late, the applicant's vehicle may be unlicensed for a period of time during which they will be unable to use it as a licensed vehicle.

5.11.4 The licence fees payable are subject to annual review and will be published together with other Council licensing fees.

5.12 Environmental Considerations

5.12.1 The DfT Guidance suggests that licensing authorities, in discussion with those responsible for environmental health issues, may wish to consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental policies that the Council may have adapted.

5.12.2 The impact of any standards should be carefully and thoroughly assessed, for example the effect on the supply of taxis and private hire vehicles in the area, to ensure the benefits of any policies outweigh the costs.

5.12.3 As part of the consultation those responsible for environmental health issues will be asked for their views.

5.12.4 At present there are no local emission controls applicable in the Council's area. If however, the Council declares an Air Quality

Management Area in any part of the Borough and especially where national air quality standards have been breached as a result of vehicle emissions, local vehicle emission controls might be brought in as part of that plan.

- 5.12.5 In the event that local emission controls were to be required by an Air Quality Action Plan the Council would review its policy on emission standards for licensed vehicles accordingly.

5.13 Stretched Limousines & Speciality Vehicles

- 5.13.1 Stretched limousines are elongated saloon cars that have been increasingly used for mainstream private hire work. Their use generally includes all private hire work plus special occasions such as stag and hen parties and children's birthday parties. Speciality vehicles may include vintage and themed vehicles.
- 5.13.2 The licensing of limousines and speciality vehicles will be approached on the basis that these vehicles have a legitimate role to play in the private hire trade, meeting a public demand. Therefore, licence applications for such vehicles will not be automatically rejected (for example just because the vehicles may be left-hand drive) and each application will be considered on its merits.
- 5.13.3 The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) have recently introduced the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) inspection regime, which verifies that a converted vehicle is built to certain safety and environmental standards. It is proposed that this standard is required from all limousine and specialty vehicles that do not meet the standard vehicles standards.
- 5.13.4 As these vehicles may not meet the usual vehicle specification, additional documentation and inspection will be needed in order that the Council's responsibility to ensure safety and suitability, prior to a licence being issued, can be met (see Appendix C).
- 5.13.5 The Council strongly recommends that anyone wishing to licence a limousine contacts the licensing section before purchasing a vehicle to ensure that advice can be provided as to whether the vehicle will meet the required standards, as each vehicle will be considered on its merits.

5.14 Contract Vehicles

- 5.14.1 Effective from January 2008, the Road Safety Act 2006 has repealed section 76 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, removing the exemption to be licensed as a private hire if working under a contract. The implication is that additional vehicles will

require licensing. While the Courts will provide the definitive interpretation of the law, Ashford Borough Council is following guidance issued by the Department of Transport in relation to definitions of private hire vehicles that will require licensing. Organisations that may be affected by the changes described above should also consider seeking their own independent legal advice.

5.15 Funeral Vehicles

5.15.1 There is no requirement for a vehicle to be licensed where it is being used in connection with a funeral, or is being wholly or mainly used by a person carrying on the business of a Funeral Director for the purpose of funerals.

5.16 Wedding Vehicles

5.16.1 A vehicle does not need to be licensed while it is being used in connection with a wedding.

5.16.2 Written certification from the Council of the relevant exemption claimed is not currently required and it is not proposed to change this arrangement.

5.17 Courtesy Cars

5.17.1 All vehicles with 8 or less seats that carry passengers for hire and reward must be licensed with the Council. Although there has been some legal debate regarding this particular issue, current case law supports the view that vehicles which are used as “courtesy cars”, i.e. for transporting customers to and from hotels, night-clubs, etc. are being provided for hire and reward in the course of business, irrespective of whether or not a charge is made for such service. They should, accordingly be licensed with the local Council, as should their “operator”.

5.17.2 Those operating “courtesy cars”, i.e. for transporting customers to and from hotels, nightclubs, etc. should have an operator’s licence, and the vehicle and the driver must be appropriately licensed.

5.18 Livery

5.18.1 Some Councils require taxis to conform to particular requirements in terms of livery and markings, in order that they may be easily identified. Such an imposition is not considered appropriate in this Council’s area. It is felt that that the visual distinction between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles can be achieved by the appropriate signage (see Appendix A). The Council does not require that licensed vehicles be

finished in a special livery or appearance, notwithstanding requirements set out in section 5.6.

6. Drivers - (Hackney Carriage & Private Hire)

6.1 Parallel Procedures

6.1.1 The statutory and practical criteria and qualifications for a private hire driver are broadly similar to those for a hackney carriage driver. The sections below, therefore, apply equally to private hire and hackney carriage drivers.

6.2 Licensed Drivers' Licences

6.2.1 This Council issues private hire drivers licences which permits that person to drive only private hire vehicles, and also a joint hackney carriage/private hire drivers licence that permits that person to drive both private hire vehicles and hackney carriages.

6.3 Age and Experience

6.3.1 The Guidance recommends against setting a maximum age limit for drivers provided that regular medical checks are made on them. It also considers that minimum age limits, beyond the statutory age for holding a full driver's licence are inappropriate, advising that applicants should be assessed on their merits. The Council will not impose either a maximum or minimum age limit for drivers. However, a minimum period of post-qualification experience of one year is required.

6.4 Testing

6.4.1 Drivers will be required to undertake testing as part of the application procedure. Details of the tests are available in Appendix D and in the applications packs.

6.5 Driving Proficiency and Qualifications

6.5.1 New applicants will be expected to have passed a suitable driving assessment specifically designed for hackney carriage and private hire drivers and carried out in accordance with the DVSA DT1 guidance on driving tests.

6.6 Medical Examination

6.6.1 The DfT recognises that it is clearly good practice for medical checks to be made on each driver as a condition for the initial grant of a licence and subsequent renewals. The Council has adopted the relevant DVLA

medical standard i.e. 'Group 2'. This is the standard applied to the licensing of lorry and bus drivers and is considered to be best practice.

- 6.6.2 A medical examination by a GP, to assess an applicant's fitness to drive a licensed vehicle, is required before a licence may be granted. A DVLA Group 2 standard of medical fitness for professional drivers will be required.
- 6.6.3 A request form for a medical examination, which may be presented to the applicant's GP, is obtainable from the Council. The applicant will be responsible for paying the fee for the examination to the relevant surgery. On completion of the examination, the report must be submitted to the Council.
- 6.6.4 Existing licence holders, having presented a medical certificate upon first being granted a licence, will be required to be re-examined every six years until 45 years of age, then every three years between 45 and 65 years of age. Annual medical checks will be required for those over 65 years of age. More frequent checks will also be necessary if, in the opinion of the medical practitioner, it is necessary.
- 6.6.5 Holders of current passenger carrying vehicle and/or large goods vehicle licences will not be exempt from the Council's medical requirements in 6.6.4.
- 6.6.6 Licence holders must advise the Council of any deterioration in their health that may affect their driving capabilities.
- 6.6.7 Where there is any doubt as to the medical fitness of the applicant, the Council may require the applicant to undergo and pay for a further medical examination by a Doctor.
- 6.6.8 Where there remains any doubt about the fitness of any applicant, the Council will review the medical evidence and make any final decision in light of the medical evidence available.

6.7 Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures

- 6.7.1 A criminal record check on a driver is an important safety measure and the Council requires new drivers to apply for an enhanced criminal records disclosure as part of the application process and for renewing drivers to repeat the application every three years.
- 6.7.2 It is the Council's view, supported by the taxi trade, that the public expects all reasonable precautions to be taken when determining whether to grant a licence to drive a hackney carriage or private hire and, as drivers are exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;

an Enhanced Disclosure will be the requirement for new drivers and for those renewing their licences.

- 6.7.3 Private Hire Drivers are obliged within 14 days to report all new convictions, official cautions, and fixed penalty notices to the Council. A similar declaration is required as part of the annual licensing process in respect to both private hire and hackney carriage drivers.
- 6.7.4 Before an application for a driver's licence will be considered, the applicant must submit an application for an Enhanced Disclosure of criminal convictions.
- 6.7.5 If a person applying for an Enhanced Disclosure has not lived in the UK for five years, then an equivalent DBS check (certificate of good conduct duly authenticated) will need to be completed by the Embassy(ies) for the country(ies) in which the applicant has been living for the last five years.
- 6.7.6 The Council is an approved Disclosure Barring Service body. Therefore applicants can deal with the Disclosure Barring Service through the Council.
- 6.7.7 The Council is bound by rules of confidentiality, and will not divulge information obtained to any third parties, except in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The applicant for an Enhanced CRB disclosure will be sent a separate disclosure report to their home address. Information arising from disclosures will be kept only for as long as is necessary and then destroyed.

6.8 Relevance of Convictions and Cautions

- 6.8.1 The Guidance recommends that in considering an individual's criminal record, authorities be encouraged to consider each case on its merits, but to take a particularly cautious view of any offences involving violence, dishonesty and sexual offences. Authorities are recommended to have a clear policy for the consideration of criminal records. For example, the number of years they will require to have elapsed since the commission of particular kinds of offences before they will grant a licence.
- 6.8.2 Guidance in relation to offences is given in Appendix E. In general terms, the more recent, serious and relevant to public safety the offence is, the less likely that an application will be granted.
- 6.8.3 A DVLA driver endorsement check will be required upon applications for new or renewal of driver licence applications, to ensure that the information held by the DVLA is in accordance with the information submitted by the applicant. The check will be made on an annual basis

and the fee for the endorsement check will be incorporated into the application fee.

6.9 Application Procedure

6.9.1 An application for a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence must be made on the specified application form. The application procedure adopted by the Council is set out in Appendix D.

6.9.2 Council officers will send a reminder letter to drivers eight weeks before their existing licence expires in order to assist applicants in their prompt submission of re-licensing applications. Drivers should ensure renewal applications are received by the Council a month in advance to ensure that licences can be processed and issued. Applications received after this date will be rejected and a new application will be required. Responsibility for ensuring renewal applications are made in time remains with the licence holder.

6.10 Grant and Renewal of Licences

6.10.1 The DfT Guidance recognises that it is important, for safety reasons, that drivers should be licensed but advises that it is not necessarily good practice to require licences to be renewed annually. It sees this requirement as imposing an undue burden on drivers and licensing authorities alike. Three years is the legal maximum period allowed for a licence and advocated as best practice.

6.10.2 Drivers' licences are issued for up to three years up until the age of 65, then on an annual basis.

6.10.3 The Guidance states some drivers may prefer an annual licence. That may be because they have plans to move to a different job or a different area, or because they cannot easily pay the fee for a three-year licence, if it is larger than the fee for an annual one. It is considered good practice to offer drivers the choice of an annual licence or a three-year licence.

6.10.4 The Council will issue licences for up to three years, but will take special circumstances on board if licences for one year are requested.

6.11 Conditions of Licence

6.11.1 The Council is not permitted to attach conditions to a hackney carriage driver's licence. It is, however, empowered to attach such conditions to a private hire driver's licence as are considered necessary.

6.11.2 Hackney carriage drivers are subject to the Council's byelaws (see Appendix F) and joint licence holders are subject to the private hire driver's conditions.

6.11.3 It is considered that the conditions set out in Appendix G are reasonably necessary and appropriate for private hire drivers.

6.12 Code of Conduct & Dress Code

6.12.1 The Council adopted a Code of Good Conduct for hackney carriage and private hire drivers in 2008 to ensure drivers were aware of the law, minimum standards of behaviour and dress. The Code is in Appendix H. The Council has also introduced an enforceable Dress Code to promote the professionalism of the drivers and to present an acceptable state of attire to visitors and residents of the Borough. The Dress Code is in Appendix L.

6.12.2 Failure to comply with any aspect of the Code of Good Conduct or Dress Code may be addressed as part of enforcement action and as a result the penalty point system has been amended. Repeated breaches following such advice or warnings may lead to more serious consequences including, if necessary, non-renewal, suspension or revocation of licences.

6.12.3 The Council believed that steps that serves to enhance the professional image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, and promotes the concept that drivers of licensed vehicles as vocational drivers is to be welcomed.

6.13 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Awareness

6.13.1 Whilst CSE training is not yet a formal legal requirement for the taxi trade, the Licensing team in association with colleagues from Kent Police, have run a number of voluntary CSE awareness sessions for the existing licensed drivers. This prompted approximately 20% of the licensed drivers to attend the free training which will also be run periodically to increase awareness of this subject within the existing licensed trade.

6.13.2 In addition to training for existing drivers, CSE awareness will be raised at all verbal tests for new drivers by means of suitable media provided by specialist colleagues. Questions will be asked of the applicant to check understanding of this issue, and where needed feedback will be given for the purposes of increasing awareness.

6.13.3 This evolving area will be kept under review and appropriate actions will be taken as and when applicable, for example inclusion of taxi specific CSE leaflets into new and renewal application packs etc.

7. Private Hire Operators

7.1 Requirements & Obligations

7.1.1 Any person who operates a private hire service (who is not also a hackney carriage proprietor who permits hackney carriages to be used for private hire) must apply to the Council for a private hire operator's licence. The objective in licensing private hire operators is the safety of the public, who will be using operators' premises and vehicles and drivers arranged through them. But again, best practice, in respect of the controls required over private hire operators, is to ensure that the costs of any licensing requirements are commensurate with benefits that they seek to achieve.

7.1.2 A private hire vehicle may only be despatched to a customer by a private hire operator who holds an operator's licence. Such a licence permits the operator to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a vehicle. A private hire operator must ensure that every private hire vehicle is driven by a person who holds a private hire driver's licence.

7.1.3 Applications for operator's licences must be made on the prescribed form, together with the appropriate fee. The Council will then decide whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

7.2 Criminal Record Checks

7.2.1 As private hire operators (as opposed to private hire vehicle drivers) are not exempt in respect of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a current (less than 1 month old) certificate from the Disclosure Barring Service or a Certificate of Good Conduct from the relevant embassy for overseas applicants will be required. A reference, covering for example the applicant's financial record, may also be required.

7.3 Conditions

7.3.1 The Council has power to impose such conditions on an operator's licence, as it considers reasonably necessary. The standard conditions set out in Appendix I are those considered to be reasonably necessary.

7.4 Record Keeping

7.4.1 Operators are required to keep records of each booking to, for example, enable police checks to be made if any mishap should befall a passenger and assist with the recovery of lost property to the rightful owner.

7.4.2 Operators must keep records in respect of all bookings, vehicles and drivers, for a period of one year. See Appendix I for more details.

7.5 Insurance

7.5.1 The Council will check that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public (e.g. taxi waiting rooms).

7.6 Licence Duration

7.6.1 Private hire operators' licences are granted for a five-year period from the date of grant, subject to the power to grant a licence for a shorter period should this be appropriate in the circumstances.

7.6.2 An operator can apply for a licence for the number of vehicles that they have at the time of application. An operator's licence authorises vehicles up to the number stated on the licence. If an operator wishes to add to their fleet above that number then an amendment would need to be applied for.

7.6.3 Holders of existing licences will normally be reminded, in the month preceding their expiry, when their licences are due to be renewed. However it remains the responsibility of the licence holder to renew their licence.

7.7 Address from which an Operator may operate

7.7.1 Upon the grant of an operator's licence, the Council will specify the address from which the operator may operate. This will be the premises where the records referred to in Paragraph 7.4 above are kept and where bookings are made. The Council will not grant a licence to an operator whose premises are located outside the borough. This is to ensure that proper regulation and enforcement measures may be taken by the Council and is in no way intended to be a restraint of trade.

7.7.2 The operator must notify the Council in writing of any change of their address, (whether this is a home address or the address from where they operate) during the period of the licence, within 7 days of such a change taking place or, preferably, before this takes place.

7.7.3 It will be the responsibility of the operator to ensure that appropriate planning consent exists for the operational address to be used for that purpose. The grant of a private hire operators licence will not imply that such consent is necessary or likely to be granted, as such determination will be subject to any appropriate planning application and consultation process.

8. Disciplinary and Enforcement Measures

8.1 Enforcement

- 8.1.1 It is recognised that well-directed enforcement activity by the Council benefits not only the public but also the responsible members of the hackney carriage and private hire trades. The DfT accepts that the resources devoted by licensing authorities to enforcement will vary according to local circumstances. They remind authorities, however, that it is desirable to ensure that hackney carriage and private hire enforcement effort is at least partly directed to the late night period, when problems such as touting tend most often to arise.
- 8.1.2 With a view to balancing the promotion of public safety with the need to permit individuals to safeguard their livelihood without undue interference, the Council will only intervene where it is necessary and proportionate to do so.
- 8.1.3 The Taxi Licensing and Enforcement Policy & Practice set out at Appendix J will be used to ensure that its enforcement effort is reasonable, transparent and well directed.

8.2 Disciplinary Hearings

- 8.2.1 Disciplinary matters, except in the case of breaches of vehicle requirements, will ordinarily be referred to the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee or dealt with by Officers. One of the functions of the Committee is to consider the impact of transgressions of the law on the fitness of an individual to hold a hackney carriage or private hire licence, and to take the action appropriate to the circumstances.

8.3 Penalty Points Scheme

- 8.3.1 Whilst the operation of a successful hackney carriage and private hire vehicle service is important to the economic well-being of the Borough, it is equally important that the service provided by the trade is properly regulated in order to instil confidence in the travelling public who wish to use the service.
- 8.3.2 The Council clearly has a responsibility to ensure that all drivers, owners and operators of vehicles adhere to basic minimum standards and to do this in a consistent and transparent manner. These standards are defined by legislation, licence conditions, codes or byelaws adopted by the Council. Together they identify what is required of the trade and help to ensure that a consistent approach is taken, by Council Officers, in their application.

8.3.3 The Council has found that an effective means of applying the conditions at a local level is through a penalty points scheme. This acts as a first step in ensuring compliance with the conditions, and serves as an “early warning” system to drivers and owners or operators who see fit to ignore their responsibilities or fail to meet the requirements of the conditions. Points are accumulated on a sliding scale dependent upon the type of offence or breach of licence conditions. These penalty points then remain “live” for a period of a year (drivers and proprietors) or two years (operators) from the date they are imposed so that only points accumulated in, for example, a rolling 24 months period are taken into account. If a driver, proprietor or operator accumulates, twelve or twenty four (as appropriate) more points within a period of two years from the date they are imposed, they would then be brought before the Committee, who have a range of options open to them, depending on the circumstances.

8.3.4 It is believed that the introduction of a penalty points scheme has assisted the trade in maintaining its high standards. The Penalty Points System does not however compromise the Council’s ability to enforce breaches of statute or local conditions in the Courts should an offence warrant such action. A copy of the revised penalty points system can be found in Appendix K.

8.4 Range of Powers

8.4.1 The Council may take steps, upon receipt of evidence that an offence has been committed in relation to a hackney carriage, private hire or operator’s licence. A breach of a condition Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy Statement amounts to an offence in this context. Details of the Council’s taxi enforcement policy are in Appendix J.

9. Delegated Powers

9.1 Licensing and Health & Safety Committee

9.1.1 The Licensing and Health and Safety Committee of Ashford Borough Council is responsible for the management of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regime in the borough.

9.2 Delegated Functions

9.2.1 The Committee has delegated responsibility for exercising the Council’s functions in respect of the following:

- Sections 47, 57, 58 60 and 79 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; and as to private hire

vehicles, sections 48, 57, 58, 60 and 79 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- Power to licence drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles under sections 51, 53, 54, 59, 61 and 79 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Power to licence operators of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles under Sections 55 to 58, 62 and 79 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Accordingly it will deal with applications and disciplinary matters referred to it by Licensing Officers.

9.2.2 The Council's Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety has delegated responsibility, in so far as it relates to hackney carriage or private hire, in respect of the licensing and registration functions of the Council listed in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) for: -

- Deciding applications for authorisations, registration, consents, licences or certificates of approval
- Serving notices and take consequential action, including carrying out work in default
- Issuing simple cautions
- Recommending the institution of legal proceedings
- Authorising officers to exercise statutory functions

9.2.3 The Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety may further delegate the power to grant or suspend refuse or revoke licenses. Licensing Officers are permitted to issue oral and written warnings, and cautions and may instigate prosecutions wherever appropriate.

9.2.4 In general terms where an applicant is aggrieved by the Council's decision to refuse to grant a licence or by any conditions imposed on a licence the applicant has a right of appeal to the Council's Appeal Committee and to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the Council's decision.

10. Fares & Fees

10.1 Fares - General

10.1.1 Councils have the power to set taxi fares for journeys within their area (there is no power to set fares for private hire vehicles). The DfT sees it as good practice to review the fare scales at regular intervals, including any graduation of the fare scale by time of day or day of the week. It suggests that in doing so authorities should pay particular regard to the needs of the travelling public, with reference both to what it is reasonable to expect people to pay but also to the need to give taxi drivers sufficient incentive to provide a service at the times when it is needed. It recognises that there may well be a case for higher fares at times of higher demand.

10.1.2 Taxi fares are a maximum, and in principle are open to downward negotiation between passenger and driver. Such negotiations are, however to be discouraged at ranks or for on street hailings as they could lead to confusion and arguments.

10.2 Fares - Prescribed rates

10.2.1 The driver of a hackney carriage vehicle, whether by agreement or otherwise, must not charge any fare greater than the rate prescribed by the Council. The driver/operator of a private hire vehicle may make their own agreement with the hirer as to the fare for a particular journey.

10.2.2 There are however, no provisions in the relevant legislation or this policy, which prevent the driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle from charging less than the fare shown on the meter.

10.2.3 It is not proposed to introduce provisions that would prevent the driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle from charging less than the fare shown on the meter.

10.4 Fares - Review

10.4.1 Fares rates are reviewed no more than once per year between December and February with any change agreed being implemented in April or May.

10.5 Receipts

10.5.1 A driver must, if requested by the passenger, provide them with a written receipt for the fare paid.

10.6 Licence Fee Structure

10.6.1 The guidance does not deal with the issue of licensing fees at all. It is, however, generally recognised that the fees set for all hackney carriage and private hire licences should be such as to ensure that the costs of the service, including the cost of issue and administration will, so far as possible be met from fee income. It is, on the other hand, not lawful for the Council to seek to make a profit from licence fees that are within its discretion. In particular, with regard to the fees charged for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and operator licences, the legislation provides that these should be sufficient to cover the costs of inspecting the vehicles, providing hackney carriage stands, and administering the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

10.6.2 The fees payable for the grant and renewal of hackney carriage and private hire licences will be reviewed annually as part of the budgetary process and a public notice will be placed in the local newspaper. Licence holders will be notified of any changes and the current scale of fees will be supplied to new applicants at the time of application.

11. Taxi Ranks

11.1 Appointed Ranks

11.1.1 A number of ranks for hackney carriages have been designated within the Ashford Borough Council area and these are listed below:

Park Street (Upper)	Rank for 9 cars
Park Street (Lower)	Rank for 8 cars
International Station	Rank for 7 cars
Domestic Station	Rank for 2 cars plus feeder rank
Tufton Street	Rank for 2 cars
Bank Street	Rank for 4/5 cars
High Street (Lower)	Rank for 5/6 cars – only in operation when area in evenings & Sundays
High Street (Upper)	Rank for 3 cars – subject to Traffic Regulation Order
Drum Lane	Rank for 2/3 cars – subject to Traffic Regulation Order

11.2 Waiting on Stands

11.2.1 It is an offence for any person to cause or permit any vehicle other than a hackney carriage to wait on any stand for hackney carriages. Drivers of hackney carriages may only wait on a stand whilst plying for hire or waiting for a fare; drivers who park on a stand and leave their vehicle unattended are committing an offence.

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Appendix A - Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicles Specification and Schedule of Conditions

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following details specify the minimum standard requirements for vehicles licensed for hire or reward by Ashford Borough Council. They have been set down for the purposes of indicating to any prospective licence holder what will be acceptable, under delegated powers, by Licensing Officers and this should be borne in mind before a vehicle is purchased. Any vehicle presented for licensing which does not comply may only be accepted after consideration of the merits of the application by the Council. The applicant will, in these circumstances, be required to submit a persuasive and substantial case for departing from the policy.

1.2 Vehicle Safety Certification

- 1.2.1 To ensure that all vehicles licensed by Ashford Borough Council are of a recognised safety standard all licensed vehicles must be certified by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) to one of the standards listed below. The vehicle must be M1 classified i.e. it was built to be a passenger carrying vehicle.

1.3 EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval

- 1.3.1 EC Approval of most road vehicles is based around “whole vehicle” framework directive and this specifies the range of approximately 50 aspects of the vehicle that must be approved including testing of brakes, seats, emissions etc. This is regarded as the highest standard of safety, and 98% of all passenger cars entering service in Great Britain are type approved to meet harmonised European standards.

1.4 UK Low Volume Type Approval

- 1.4.1 Low volume type approval is a special scheme to enable vehicles made in small numbers to be registered in the UK. The operation of the scheme has been tailored to suit the needs of the smaller manufacturer. Under this Type Approval system, a prototype is tested. If it meets the requirements and the production arrangements also pass conformity inspection, then vehicles of the same type can be sold and registered without each one having to be tested and inspected. This approval currently represents “best practice” for taxi converters. Many taxi conversions are available, some wheelchair accessible, manufactured under Low Volume Type Approval. These vehicles meet the highest safety standards available.

1.5 Individual Vehicle Authorisation

1.5.1 This approval is also for individual vehicles that do not have European Type Approval. However, as well as the visual examination carried out on the vehicle, additional documentary evidence that the vehicle complies with the Type Approval standards has to be produced. The Vehicle Inspectorate can accept an equivalent standard certificate by or on behalf of a foreign authority, or can do a comparison between two vehicles to satisfy themselves that the vehicle meets this standard. Some destructive tests are done on one vehicle and then every other vehicle of this make is given a visual inspection to check that it is of the same vehicle construction as the one that was destructively tested. From October 2003 evidence of crashworthiness has also been required.

1.6 Other Vehicle Requirements

1.6.1 When licensing hackney carriage and private hire vehicles the Council has to consider the need for safety, convenience, and comfort of passengers in vehicles that operate in rural, urban and motorway environments. The size and engine capacity has also been considered given that all vehicles are required to carry their licensed number of passengers together with their luggage. The Council considers that a vehicle should normally be of manufacturers' original specification and shall be constructed and designed: -

- For the Carriage of not less than 4 and not more than 8 passengers with the provision of a seatbelt for each passenger
- With the seat provided for each passenger having a minimum width of 405 millimetres (16 inches) measured across its narrowest part
- Not to be left-hand drive. Right hand drive passenger vehicles offer the driver clearer and safer vision in an overtaking manoeuvre, and also eliminate the need for a front seat passenger to alight from the vehicle into the road
- With a minimum power output equivalent to 90 BHP
- To have windows to the side and rear providing natural light to passenger compartment
- If the vehicle is LPG converted, the vehicle must be registered on the UK LGP register or equivalent to demonstrate that the work was been conducted by a competent and safe installer.

1.7 Compliance Testing

1.7.1 As well as holding a suitable approval certificates (see Vehicle Certification above), all vehicles must be submitted for inspection and certified fit for public use, before the issue of a licence. Within the Borough of Ashford, this is known as Compliance Testing and is required every 6 months for every licensed vehicle after initial testing. It is the proprietor's responsibility to present the vehicle for inspection and testing by or on behalf of the Council at such time and at such place within the Borough as the Council may by notice reasonably require.

1.8 Licence Plate

1.8.1 The proprietor must ensure that the licence plate provided and allocated to them by Ashford Borough Council is maintained in a clear and legible condition and is affixed to the outside of the Carriage, on or adjacent to the rear bumper or in such other position as may be approved by the Council. Also;

- The Council must be informed should the licence plate be lost broken or defaced
- The Proprietor shall not cause or permit the vehicle to be used or operated with the said plate so defaced that any figure or material particular is illegible
- The Proprietor must notify the Council of any change of address forthwith
- The Proprietor must notify the Council of any intended change in use of the specified vehicle, or any change in the particulars supplied at the time of application for the licence and of any modifications made to the vehicle, including seating arrangements

1.9 Licence

1.9.1 The licence must be kept in the possession of the Proprietor and be produced on request to an authorised officer of the Council, or any Police Officer. Also;

- In the event of loss of or damage to this licence the Council must be informed immediately so that a replacement can be issued
- On revocation, expiry, transfer or suspension of the licence, the licence and the plate issued in respect of the vehicle must be returned to the Council forthwith upon service of a notice on the Proprietor

- The licence must not be altered or defaced in any way
- The proprietor must notify the Council of any change of address forthwith
- The proprietor must notify the Council of any intended change in use of the specified vehicle, or any change in the particulars supplied at the time of application for the licence and of any modifications made to the vehicle, including seating arrangements

1.10 Ownership and Insurance

1.10.1 The proprietor shall ensure that the vehicle is not be used in the district unless there is in force in relation to the vehicle a policy of insurance complying with the requirements of the Road Traffic Acts and which covers the vehicle for the Carriage of passengers for hire or reward. The Certificate of Insurance must be produced upon request by an authorised officer of the Council, or by a Police Officer. On renewal of the policy, a copy should be lodged with the Council at the earliest opportunity.

1.11 Age

1.11.1 Vehicles will not normally be accepted for licensing, or continue to licensed, after seven years from the date of their first registration. Certain purpose built taxis (those vehicles whose DVLA registration document the states the model as “taxi”) will be accepted for licensing up to ten years from first registration, providing their mechanical condition and appearance is satisfactory.

1.11.2 Where the age of a vehicle is not identifiable, the age will be calculated as three years old at the date of registration in line with the policy of the DVLA.

1.11.3 Extensions may be given to vehicles older than 7 or 10 years (as appropriate) upon renewal, but this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Extensions will be given for up to one year and consideration will only be given to vehicles with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim.

1.12 Doors

1.12.1 In the interest of safety each vehicle should have a minimum 4 doors, which are capable of being opened from the inside.

1.13 Seating

1.13.1 Seating in saloon and estate cars does not normally create concern. Multi-purpose vehicles (MPV's) or people carriers offer a bewildering number of seat configurations often to match the owner's needs. In the interests of the safety of the passengers it is necessary to examine these seating arrangements to ensure that in the event of a collision or fire there is unobstructed egress from the vehicle. If MPV's or people carriers have individual seats, it may be necessary to remove a second row middle seat to permit improved access to the rearmost seats. This however would reduce the maximum permissible passengers by one. Alternatively, in the event of an emergency, passengers should be able to exit the vehicle through the rear and emergency brake glass hammers must be fitted.

1.13.2 Therefore:

- The passenger carrying capacity will be at the discretion of the Council
- The rear seat of the vehicle must be a minimum of 1.22 meters long (405 millimetres, 16 inches per person)
- All seats must be fitted with fully operational seat belts
- The number of passenger seats must remain as stated on the vehicle licence
- There must be no alteration to the seating configuration without notifying the Council
- All seats must be forward or rear facing
- All vehicles must be able to seat a minimum of 4 passengers in comfort with sufficient legroom for all passengers
- The seat covering must be clean and in a good state of repair

1.14 Maintenance, Appearance and Condition of the Vehicle

The vehicle and its fittings must, when being presented for inspection and at all times during when it is licensed and available for hire:

- Be safe
- Be tidy
- Be clean

- Comply with all relevant statutory requirements applicable to the class of vehicle to which it belongs including, but without prejudice to the Motor Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations which currently apply
- The vehicle must be maintained throughout the term of the vehicle licence to a high standard of appearance to the complete satisfaction of the Council

1.15 Tyre Safety

1.15.1 In view of the high mileage covered by Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles and the interval between examinations, the depth of tyre tread on all vehicles must be a minimum of 2mm.

1.16 Exterior Appearance

1.16.1 All paintwork will be professionally finished and the vehicle free from dents and damage to either bodywork or fittings. Bare metal, primer paint, visible rust and perforations will not be permitted.

1.17 Interior Appearance

1.17.1 The interior of the vehicle should always be in a clean and tidy state and fit for purpose.

- Carpets, upholstery and cloth trim are to be clean and undamaged. Good quality seat covers and carpet mats may be used, provided that each is a matching set, of a colour co-ordinating with the vehicle and kept in good condition
- All plastic fascia, door linings, roof linings and trim are to be kept free from marks, stains and damage
- All doors, locks and windows are to be in full working order and in good condition
- All interior lights and fascia illumination are to be in full working order and in good condition
- All windows are to be kept free of dirt, grime and marks
- Boot space/luggage areas to be kept clean and vehicle equipment properly stowed

1.17.2 If in the opinion of the Council, a vehicle is in such a condition internally or externally as to render its use by the public as undesirable, the Council shall notify the proprietor thereof whereupon the proprietor shall not use or cause or permit the use of the vehicle until the Council

has re-inspected the vehicle and confirms that it has been brought to a standard suitable for public use.

1.18 Tinted Glass

1.18.1 Vehicles are manufactured and produced with window glass in various tints or film coatings from clear to jet-black, the latter making it impossible to view into the passenger compartment. The removal of film coating from windows is far less expensive than the changing of glass. These heavily tinted windows may be of concern to women passengers travelling alone, and parents of children travelling unaccompanied. Many of the vehicles supplied with tinted glass are acceptable with reference to the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, however in the interests of safety and reassurance of passengers, tinted glass or mirrored glass that restricts all view into the passenger compartment will not be accepted on licensed vehicles.

1.19 Fire Extinguisher & First Aid Kit

1.19.1 All vehicles must carry a standard motorist's first aid kit and an easily accessible and compliant fire extinguisher, both of which must be in a serviceable condition.

1.20 Accidents

1.20.1 In the event of a vehicle being involved in an accident, the Proprietor must inform the Council as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any case within 72 hours of any accident causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of persons carried therein. If the damage to the vehicle is such that the Council reasonably considers the damage to be extensive enough to seriously affect the general appearance and/or use of the vehicle and so notifies the Proprietor, the vehicle shall immediately be withdrawn from service and shall not be used until such time as the permanent repairs are completed and a compliance test conducted.

1.21 Accessible vehicles

1.21.1 Where a vehicle is utilised for the carriage of passengers in a wheelchair, the following conditions shall apply:

- Access to and exit from the wheelchair position must not be obstructed in any manner at any time except by wheelchair loading apparatus

- Wheelchair internal anchorage must be of the manufacturer's design and construction and secured in such a position as not to obstruct any emergency exit
- A suitable restraint must be available for the occupant of a wheelchair
- Access ramps or lifts to the vehicle must be securely fixed prior to use, and be able to support the wheelchair, occupant and helper
- Ramps and lifts must be securely stored in the vehicle before it may move off

1.21.3 Any equipment fitted to the vehicle for the purpose of lifting a wheelchair into the vehicle must have been tested in accordance with the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/2307). Any such equipment must be maintained in good working order and be available for use at all times.

1.21.4 Where a vehicle is designed or adapted to carry a wheelchair, the proprietor/operator shall ensure that the driver has received sufficient training to load, secure and convey wheelchair users.

1.21.5 Under the Equality Act 2010, licensed drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles are under a duty to carry passengers with guide, hearing and other assistance dogs without additional charge. To ensure that the Equality Act 2010 is upheld, the licensing authority will have a zero tolerance policy to access refusals investigating all reported violations of the Act with a view to pursuing a conviction.

When carrying such passengers, drivers have a duty to:

- a) Convey the disabled passenger's dog and allow it to remain under the physical control of the owner; and
- b) Not to make any additional charge for doing so.

It is best practice for drivers to ask the passenger where they want themselves and their dog to sit in the vehicle.

Drivers who have a certifiable medical condition which is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the council for exemption from the duty on medical grounds. If no exemption has been applied for and subsequently granted, then drivers are still required to carry assistance dogs.

The Licensing Authority will only issue an exemption certificate when it is authorised by the driver's GP and is accompanied by medical evidence, for example a blood test, a skin prick test or clinical history.

1.22 Luggage in Estate Cars

1.22.1 Estate cars cause a safety concern when stacking luggage in the vehicle causing a potential danger to passengers in the event of harsh braking or an accident. It is recommended that luggage should not be stacked above the height of the rear seats unless the vehicle is designed, or fitted with suitable luggage restraints or covers to prevent luggage from entering the passenger compartment.

1.21.2 In the case of rear access wheelchair loading, the design of the vehicle should ensure that there is an emergency escape provided by side doors and a gangway or foldable/removable seats.

1.23 Roof racks and roof mounted luggage boxes

1.23.1 These offer convenience that has to be balanced with safety. Most roof-mounted devices have weight limits. These are set to ensure the weight carried on the roof or the luggage boxes does not significantly alter the vehicle's driving characteristics by changing the vehicle's centre of gravity. If weight is added to the roof of a vehicle beyond a manufacturer's recommendation, the centre of gravity is moved upwards and vehicle may become unstable. Therefore as the permissible weight for roof racks and luggage boxes varies from vehicle to vehicle, it is recommended that any Proprietor who wishes to use either must apply to the Council for permission. The Licensing Officer will then make the necessary enquiries, and the licence shall be amended to show the maximum permitted weight.

1.24 Trailers

1.24.1 Trailers may also be used as a means of carrying luggage. There are no British Standards that define the specification requirements of trailers or a specific British Standard that defines how they may be tested for roadworthiness but they are subject to The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. Common sense dictates that if the towing vehicle is regulated by the Council it would follow the any towed trailer should be the same. Therefore any authorised trailer should be presented for compliance check at same time as the licensed vehicle to ensure that it is roadworthy. All vehicles have a maximum permissible towing weight, and this differs as to whether the trailer has its own braking system or not. It is recommended that any Proprietor who wishes to use a trailer must apply to the Council. The Licensing Officer will make the necessary enquiries, which may require the vehicle and trailer being examined to establish its towing weight, and the vehicle licence amended to show this.

1.25 Taximeters

1.25.1 The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall ensure the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter approved by the Council, and that meter shall be maintained in a sound working condition at all times. The taximeter shall be set for up to the current maximum tariff agreed by the Council and no unauthorised adjustment of the meter shall be made. The proprietor shall ensure the "For Hire" sign or other illuminated sign is extinguished when the fare commences, and the taximeter brought into operation.

1.25.2 The taximeter shall:

- Be of the clock calendar type or an approved taximeter and charge no more than the wording of the Councils current maximum fare tariff
- Not be altered or tampered with except with the approval of the Council and must be retested by the Council if it is altered
- Show the fare recorded on the taximeter in plainly legible figures, and the word "FARE" shall be clearly displayed so as to apply to such figures
- Be kept surely fixed in such a position so that the fare recorded is visible to all passengers within the vehicle at all times, and the figures shall be illuminated for this purpose whenever necessary

1.25.3 A private hire vehicle may also be fitted with a taximeter, approved by the Council, at the discretion of the Proprietor.

1.25.4 The taximeter shall: -

- Be of the clock calendar type or an approved taximeter and charge no more than the wording of the proprietor's current maximum fare tariff
- Not be altered or tampered with except with the approval of the Council and must be retested by the Council if it is altered
- Show the fare recorded on the taximeter in plainly legible figures
- Be kept surely fixed in such a position so that the fare recorded is visible to all passengers within the vehicle at all times, and the figures shall be illuminated for this purpose whenever necessary

1.26 Fare Tables

1.26.1 A hackney carriage proprietor shall ensure that a copy of the current fare table supplied by the Council is on display inside the hackney

carriage at all times and that table is not concealed from view or rendered illegible when the vehicle is for hire.

1.26.2 If a taximeter is fitted within a private hire vehicle, details of the tariff of fares to which it is calibrated shall be clearly on display within the vehicle.

1.27 Two Way Radios

1.27.1 The proprietor shall ensure that any radio equipment fitted to the licensed vehicle is at all times kept in a safe and sound condition and maintained in proper working order.

1.28 Mobile Telephones

1.28.1 Mobile telephones may only be used with a hands-free kit.

1.29 Smoking

1.29.1 Under the Health Act 2006 and the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2007, all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are required by law to be smoke free and are also required to display the prescribed no-smoking signs and the signage must be displayed in a prominent position.

1.29.2 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are required to be smoke free at all times, whether they are being used for work or for private use.

1.29.3 The Smoke-free (Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the persons who will have legal duties to cause any person who is smoking on a smoke free vehicle to stop smoking, namely:

- The driver
- Any person with management responsibilities for the vehicle
- Any person in a vehicle who is responsible for order or safety in it

1.30 Insurance

1.30.1 A copy of a vehicle's current valid insurance document must be kept with the vehicle and available for inspection by a Licensing Officer.

2 Conditions Relevant to Hackney Carriage Vehicles Only

2.1 A hackney carriage vehicle can only be driven by a person licensed to drive that particular type of vehicle, and that driver's licence having

been issued by the Council. A Joint Licence permits the driver to drive both types of vehicle.

- 2.2 No hackney carriage shall be used in the district under a contract or purported contract for private hire except at a rate of fares or charges not greater than that fixed by the Council in relation to hackney carriages, and when any hackney carriage is so used the fare or charges shall be calculated from the point in the borough at which the hirer (or user) commences their journey.
- 2.3 The proprietor of a hackney carriage vehicle must ensure that the driver lodges their hackney carriage driver's licence with the proprietor until the driver ceases to drive for that proprietor.
- 2.4 Full livery advertising is allowed on the exterior of hackney carriages subject to the following restrictions:
- Nothing shall be advertised which might cause reasonable offence to members of the public
 - The Council reserves the right to require that any advertisement it deems unsuitable be removed forthwith
- 2.5 Hackney carriage vehicles will be issued with a device required to activate the lowering and rising of the barriers situated in restricted roads. Each device may only be used in conjunction with the hackney carriage plate that it was issued to. Furthermore;
- The device must only be used whilst the licensed vehicle is being used in conjunction with journeys associated with hire and reward, not for personal journeys
 - It is the proprietor's responsibility to ensure the device is fitted to the licensed vehicle
 - The device must not be transferred to any alternative vehicle without the prior approval of the Council
 - On revocation, non-renewal or suspension of the licence, the device must be returned to the Council for deactivation
 - Damage to (or theft of) any device must be reported to the Council without delay
 - The licence holder will allow a Licensing Officer to inspect and if necessary remove the device at any reasonable time upon written or verbal notice
 - The issuing of a replacement device may incur a fee

2.6 Hackney carriages shall be fitted with an approved roof sign which: -

- Indicates that they are a taxi
- Is capable of being illuminated when the vehicle is plying for hire, such illumination to be extinguished when the taximeter operates
- Unless integral to the bodywork of the vehicle, is positioned in the centre of the roof

3 Conditions Relevant to Private Hire Vehicles Only

3.1 No vehicle will be accepted for licensing as a private hire vehicle if its appearance is likely to create confusion in the minds of the travelling public that it may be a hackney carriage. For this reason, any operator intending to provide private hire services should avoid vehicles, which are recognisable as purpose built "London style" cabs, or similar vehicles.

3.2 A private hire vehicle can only be driven by a person licensed to drive that particular type of vehicle, and that driver's licence having been issued by Ashford Borough Council. A Joint Licence permits the driver to drive both types of vehicle.

3.3 The operator of a private hire vehicle must ensure that the driver lodges their private hire driver's licence with the proprietor until the driver ceases to drive for that proprietor.

3.4 Private hire vehicles will not be permitted to display any type of roof sign.

3.5 Private hire vehicles are only permitted to display on the outside or inside of the vehicle the following:

- Vehicle licence plate
- Approved Kent County Council (KCC) School Transport Sign when operating in conjunction with school contracts
- Any other thing required to be displayed by law

3.6 Private hire vehicles are permitted restricted first party advertising subject to the following restrictions:

- The advertising material shall be restricted to the metal surface of the drivers and front passengers' doors. If advertising material is to be displayed, it must include the words "ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY" OR "PRIVATE HIRE ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY". It can

include the Proprietor's company name, logo, website, email address or telephone number

- The advertising material shall not contain the words "TAXI", "HACKNEY", "CAB" or "FOR HIRE". This restriction includes the use of the words when used within the proprietor's company name, log, website or email address
- The advertising material shall be non-reflective
- Nothing shall be advertised which might reasonably cause offence to members of the public

3.7 Private hire vehicles are not permitted to display on the outside or inside of the vehicle in such a manner to be conspicuous from the outside any other signs, telephone numbers or other advertising material. (i.e. business cards on the dashboard).

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Appendix B - Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Procedures

1 Applications for new or renewed vehicle licence

1.1 The applicant will complete, in full, the necessary application form as follows:

- New application for hackney carriage vehicle licence
- Renewal application for hackney carriage vehicle licence
- New application for private hire vehicle licence
- Renewal application for private hire vehicle licence

And submitted and accompanied by the following:

- The Vehicle Registration Document issued by DVLA or proof of ownership. This must show the vehicle as belonging to the applicant either wholly or jointly with any other person(s) hereinafter described as proprietor(s)
- Evidence that the vehicle is insured for third party risks to cover "hire and reward". This will be by way of original cover note or certificate of insurance
- The fee, which will be determined annually and publicised separately
- The compliance certificate for the vehicle

1.2 If the documentation is complete, photocopies will be taken of all original documents. The copies will be retained and the originals returned to the applicant.

1.3 The successful completion of this procedure will be indicated by the issue of an appropriate hackney carriage/private hire vehicle licence together with the necessary signs for the vehicle, which must not be used for Hire or reward until these are attached to the vehicle.

1.4 Applications for renewals should be received by the Council at least 14 days before the expiry of the vehicle licence in order that the licence can be processed and issued before the expiry of the current licence.

2 Application to transfer a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Licence

- 2.1 Section 49 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that the proprietor of a licensed vehicle has the right to transfer ownership of that vehicle to another person. Appropriate notice of the transfer must be given to the Council within 14 days. In practice, such vehicles are generally in use for hire or reward immediately transfer of ownership has been arranged. Also it will be necessary for proprietors to change vehicles on occasions for a variety of reasons.

In these instances it will be necessary to obtain a new licence with updated details of the new owner/vehicle. The applicant will complete, in full, the necessary application form as follows:

- Transfer application for hackney carriage vehicle licence
- Transfer application for private hire vehicle licence

And submitted and accompanied by the following:

- The Vehicle Registration Document issued by DVLA or proof of ownership (which must show the vehicle as belonging to the applicant either wholly or jointly with any other person(s) hereinafter described as proprietor(s))
- Evidence that the vehicle is insured for third party risks to cover "hire and reward". This will be by way of a cover note or certificate of insurance
- The fee. Fees will be determined annually and publicised separately
- The compliance certificate for the vehicle

- 2.2 If the documentation is complete, photocopies will be taken of all original documents. The copies will be retained and the originals returned to the applicant.

- 2.3 The successful completion of this procedure will be indicated by the issue of an appropriate hackney carriage/private hire vehicle licence together with the necessary signs for the vehicle, which must not be used for hire or reward until these are attached to the vehicle.

Appendix C - Additional Conditions for Private Hire Limousines & Speciality Vehicles

These conditions are in addition to the private hire vehicle conditions, except where the conditions below supersede the standard conditions.

1 Types of Vehicles

1.1 The vehicle must have one of the following:

- (i) An Individual Vehicle Authorisation;
- (ii) A European Whole Vehicle Approval Certificate;
- (iii) UK Low Volume Type Approval Certificate.

1.2 If the vehicle has a an Individual Vehicle Authorisation, the Council will expect that the vehicle will have been modified in accordance with a program approved by the original vehicle manufacturer and have appropriate documentary proof. The licensee must produce a copy of the IVA certificate at time of licensing.

2 Vehicle and Safety Equipment

2.1 Stretched limousines and speciality vehicles shall comply with the existing conditions of licence applicable to all licensed private hire vehicles in so far as they are not superseded by these additional conditions and the local private hire licence fee shall be the same.

2.2 The proprietor of a vehicle shall:

- Ensure that the fire extinguisher required to comply with the standard vehicle conditions of licence applicable to all licensed private hire vehicles should be mounted on brackets, in a convenient position in the driver's compartment
- Ensure that the vehicle and all its fittings and equipment are at all times kept in a fit, serviceable, efficient, safe and clean condition and all relevant statutory requirements (including those contained in the Motor Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations) are fully complied with. Should the vehicle fail to comply with any legal requirement then the vehicle should be removed from service until the reasons for non-compliance is rectified
- Ensure that loose luggage is not carried within the passenger compartment of the vehicle
- Ensure that any CCTV cameras installed in the vehicle have received prior written approval of the Council

- Display a Council approved sign, in a position clearly visible to passengers, warning customers that camera surveillance equipment may be in operation
 - Ensure the vehicle is fitted with tyres that meet both the size and weight specification
- 2.3 Vehicles may be granted an exemption from the requirement under the conditions of licence for private hire vehicles to be right hand drive.
- 2.4 Vehicles with sideways facing seating may be considered for private hire licensing.
- 2.5 The passenger compartment of the vehicle may be fitted with darkened or blackened glass if approved by the Council.
- 2.6 The driver's compartment, including the front passenger seat must not be fitted with darkened or blackened glass.
- 2.7 The licence holder shall not at any time use or permit to be used in the vehicle a radio scanner or citizen band radio.

3 **Use of Vehicle**

- 3.1 The proprietor of the vehicle shall: -
- Ensure that the vehicle is at all times only driven by a person who holds a current private hire vehicle driver's licence issued by Ashford Borough Council
 - Not permit to be conveyed in the vehicle more than the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed, regardless of the age or size of the passengers
 - Ensure that in any advertisement publicising their business, the vehicle is only licensed to carry a maximum of eight passengers
 - Not convey any passengers in the front compartment of the limousine
 - Not supply any intoxicating liquor in the vehicle unless there is in force an appropriate authorisation under the Licensing Act 2003 permitting the sale or supply of the same
 - If the occupants are below the age of 18, there should be no alcohol in the vehicle for consumption or otherwise
 - Any glassware in the vehicle must be made of either shatterproof glass or plastic

- The driver shall not play or permit the performance of any media that, given its age classification or content, is unsuitable for the age of the passengers in the vehicle
- If the vehicle parks to provide some sort of entertainment to its passengers, the relevant authorisation must be in place in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003
- When directed by the Council, display and maintain any notices in conspicuous position

4 **Vehicle Identification**

4.1 The vehicle will not be required to display the rear, external private hire vehicle licence plates which must normally be displayed by licensed private hire vehicles. The proprietor of the vehicle will be issued, by the Council, a paper licence and the exemption certificate which identifies the vehicle as a private hire vehicle on which will be displayed the registration number of the vehicle and the number of passengers permitted to be carried. The proprietor shall ensure that:

- This licence and the exemption certificate will be carried at all times within the vehicle
- No private hire vehicle licence or exemption certificate shall be parted with, lent or used on any other vehicle and the loss or damage of the vehicle identification shall be reported to the Council as soon as the proprietor is aware of the loss. In the event of ceasing to use the vehicle for private hire (special event) purposes the proprietor shall surrender the vehicle identification and licence to the Council within seven days

5 **Signs, Notices, Etc.**

5.1 No signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, numbers, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle, other than those specifically approved by the Council.

6 **Insurance and Compliance Test Certificates**

6.1 The vehicle must not be used to carry passengers for hire and reward unless the following is in place;

- A current certificate of compliance test certificate
- A policy of insurance covering the use of the vehicle for hire and

reward and any nominated driver, named thereon, is the holder of an Ashford Borough Council private hire driver's licence

- 6.3 These documents shall be produced to an authorised officer of the Council or a Police Officer at such time and place as may be required.

The proprietor shall deposit a valid and current copy of the certificate of compliance test certificate and certificate of insurance or cover note with the operator before the vehicle is used to accept bookings provided by the operator.

- 6.4 If the insurance cover on the vehicle is cancelled, expires or fails to cover the use to which the vehicle is being put, the Licence Officer shall be informed immediately and the vehicle shall not be used until appropriate cover is obtained.

7 Deposit of Licences

- 7.1 If the proprietor permits or employs any other person to drive their private hire vehicle, they shall, before that person commences to drive the vehicle, cause the driver to deliver to them a copy of their private hire driver's licence (paper part) for retention until such time as the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive that vehicle.
- 7.2 The proprietor of the vehicle will deposit within five working days, a copy of the private hire vehicle licence with the operator before any bookings are accepted.
- 7.3 The loss of any vehicle or driver licence shall be reported to the Council as soon as possible.

8 Declaration

- 8.1 All limousine operators will be required to sign a declaration stating that the vehicle will not carry more than 8 passengers and at the time of booking the vehicle, the restriction of carrying no more than 8 passengers shall be explained to the hirer.

Appendix D - Driver & Operator Licence Procedures

1 Application for New Licence to drive a Licensed Vehicle

- 1.1 New applications are usually for private hire licenses. For those wishing to be considered for a hackney carriage licence, it is recommended that they have held a private hire drivers licence for at least 6 months before undertaking the hackney carriage test.
- 1.2 The applicant will complete, in full, the application for a licence to drive hackney carriage/private hire vehicle, which will be submitted and accompanied by a full UK Drivers Licence that has been held for at least 12 months. This application form must be completed in full and signed as a Statutory Declaration. Any omissions, whether knowingly or recklessly is an offence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and as such it is highly likely that the application would not be successful.
- 1.3 Where applicants have recently arrived from other countries, they will be required to convert their existing driving licence to a UK issue, either by straight transfer or by undertaking an appropriate driving test. The Council requires that the twelve-month qualifying period for holding such a licence will start from the time of the conversion.
- 1.4 An applicant who has held a licence from another country for 12 months or more and has converted it to a UK licence may obtain an exemption from the 12 months qualifying period by passing the DSA test and providing proof that they have been driving for 12 months in that other country.
- 1.5 The applicant shall submit the following in person to one of the Council Offices for checking:
 - A completed application form
 - A licence application fee. Fees will be determined annually and publicised separately
 - Four colour standard passport photographs
 - A full UK Drivers licence
 - A certificate issued to demonstrate that they have taken and passed a recognised Taxi/Private Hire Driving Assessment Test. (Details can be found at www.ashford.gov.uk)
 - A medical certificate indicating they are physically fit and able to fulfil the role to DVLA Vocational Group 2 Standards

- Suitable identify documents as required by the Immigration Act to demonstrate the right to work.
 - A DVLA Data Subject Check form that permits the Council to confirm the individual's driving history
 - A completed application form for an Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check accompanied with the requisite fee and documentation to confirm identity and address, or alternatively a DBS certificate dated within the last month.
 - In the event that the applicant has not resided within the UK during the last 5 years, a Certificate of Good Conduct from their relevant embassy or equivalent document issued and authenticated by the appropriate embassy will also be required
 - If the documentation is complete, photocopies will be taken of all original documents and returned to the applicant
- 1.6 Before the application proceeds further, the applicant will be required to undergo a test of their topographical knowledge of villages, major routes and places of interest within the borough of Ashford, the Highway Code and the law/conditions relating to private hire.
- 1.7 Where the applicant fails 3 consecutive tests within a 4-month period, it will be unlikely that the applicant has the appropriate skills and attributes to become a licensed driver with this Council. Further testing would not normally take place for at least 12 months to enable the applicant to develop the necessary skills unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 1.8 If a driver is not able to satisfactorily complete the topographical and other tests due to difficulties with spoken English they may be required to take language instruction as a pre-requisite to re-sitting these tests.
- 2 Application for a Joint Licence (Hackney Carriage & Private Hire)**
- 2.1 Applicants for a joint licence will need to undergo a hackney knowledge test, conducted by the Council, for which a fee is charged. This test will require a more in depth knowledge of the borough's roads, streets, and places of interest, hotels, pubs and clubs. It will also include questions on the Highway Code and the law/conditions relating to hackney carriages and private hire.
- 2.2 Hackney drivers returning to the trade within two years of licence expiry will not need to resit the knowledge test. Those returning after this time will need to undertake the test to demonstrate sufficient knowledge.

3 Application for Renewal of a Licence to Drive Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle

3.1 The applicant will complete in full, the application for licence to drive hackney carriage/private hire vehicle form, duly signed as a **Statutory Declaration**. This will then be submitted and accompanied by the following:

- A licence application fee. Fees will be determined annually and publicised separately
- Two colour standard passport photographs
- A DVLA Data Subject Check form that permits the Council to confirm the individual's driving history
- A medical certificate indicating they are physically fit and able to fulfil the role to DVLA Vocational Group 2 Standards
- Suitable identify documents as required by the Immigration Act to demonstrate the right to work.
- A completed application form for an Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check, together with the requisite documentation. We would recommend and highlight to licensees the facility afforded by the Online DBS update service.

3.2 An Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check will need to be submitted in person to the Council offices for checking.

4 Application for Private Hire Vehicle Operator's Licence

4.1 The applicant will complete, in full, the application for private hire vehicle operator's licence form, which will be submitted and accompanied by the following.-

- Proof of public liability insurance (if applicable)
- The licence application fee.
- If the applicant has not previously been through the driver's application process, a Basic Disclosure Barring Service check (less than 3 months old) for each person named on the application form

4.2 If a Disclosure Barring Service check is required this application will need to be submitted in person through www.disclosure.scotland.gov.uk and the original to be submitted as part of the application.

5 Applications – General

- 5.1 If the application form contains any details to suggest that any relevant convictions or cautions have been imposed on the applicant since the licence was last issued or renewed, Licensing Officers will discuss the matter with the applicant. At that time it will be decided whether the application is likely to be successful in the light of the Council's Policy of the Relevance of Convictions detailed in Appendix E, The DBS check will be applied for before any further consideration of the application.
- 5.2 An Enhanced DBS Disclosure of criminal convictions in respect of each licensed driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is required on initial licence application and upon renewal.
- 5.3 The Council may request another disclosure at any time if a further check is considered necessary.
- 5.4 When the DBS check has been returned, the application will be considered in the light of the information provided. The information received from the DBS will be used to ascertain whether the information given on the original application form was correctly and truthfully provided. It is therefore necessary to ensure that details of ALL convictions and cautions are provided at the initial stage. A serious view will be taken of any application that seeks to conceal any caution or conviction in order to obtain a licence. This is a criminal offence and, as such, is likely to lead, not only to consideration of the applicant as not being a "fit and proper person", but criminal proceedings. Any information relating to criminal background will be kept only for as long as it is necessary for assessment purposes.
- 5.5 In the event that there are no relevant convictions or cautions held, the applicant will be considered to be a "fit and proper person" and the matter will be determined by the issue of the driver's/operator's licence.
- 5.6 Applications considered by the Council will result in either the determination of the applicant as a "fit and proper person", indicated by the issue of a licence, or the application being refused. In these circumstances, the applicant has the right of appeal to the Council's Appeals Committee and to the Magistrates' Court, such appeal to be lodged within 21 days of the decision being notified.
- 5.7 In view of the special considerations when dealing with those passengers of differing physical abilities, it may be necessary to test the awareness of the applicant of these issues. In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph, consideration may be given to the differing types of vehicle likely to be used by the

individual concerned and the difficulties arising in each case.

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Appendix E - Guidelines Relating to the Relevance of Previous Convictions

1 General Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the criteria taken into account by the council when determining whether or not an applicant or an existing licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage and/or private hire vehicle licence.
- 1.2 The overriding aim of the licensing authority is to protect the safety of the public. The licensing authority is concerned to ensure:
- That a person is a fit and proper person.
 - That the person does not pose a threat to the public.
 - That the public are safeguarded from dishonest persons.
 - The safeguarding of children and young persons.
- 1.3 This policy provides guidance to any person with an interest in public and private hire licensing. In particular, but not exclusively:
- Applicants for drivers' licenses
 - Existing licensed drivers whose licences are being reviewed or renewed
 - Licensing officers
 - Members of the licensing committee/ panel

Where licensing officers have delegated powers to grant licences, they will utilise these guidelines when making a decision to grant a licence. In all other cases applications for licences will be referred to the licensing committee. Whilst officers and the committee/panel will have regard to the guidelines contained in the policy, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the committee/officer may depart from the guidelines.

- 1.4 The Council has a duty to ensure, so far as possible, that applicants are 'fit and proper' persons to hold licences and in the absence of a judicially approved definition of "fit and proper", the Council tend to use the test of:

Would the Officer charged with the ability to grant a licence 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 licensed vehicle with the applicant alone?

The wording of this test originates from Button, J. T. H. (1999), Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice, Butterworths, London.

- 1.6 Whilst the committee / panel may consider that a person with a conviction for a serious offence need not be automatically barred from obtaining a licence, it would normally be expected that the applicant would be required to:
- a. Remain free of conviction for an appropriate period as detailed below; and
 - b. Show adequate evidence that they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence (the onus is on the applicant to produce such evidence).

(Simply remaining free of conviction may not generally be regarded as adequate evidence that a person is a fit and proper person to hold a licence).

- 1.7 The standards and criteria set out in the paragraphs below are those that would normally be applied to applications and licences. Each case will be considered on its own merits, and the licensing authority may depart from these criteria, however it must only do so in exceptional circumstances. The otherwise good character and driving record of the applicant of licence holder will not ordinarily be considered as exceptional circumstances.
- 1.8 Where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence, the licensing authority cannot review the merits of the conviction [Nottingham City Council v. Mohammed Farooq (1998)].

2. Powers

- 2.1 Section 61 and Section 62 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 allow the licensing authority to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a licence if the application/licence holder has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency, violence; failure to comply with the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847; failure to comply with the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; or any other reasonable cause.
- 2.2 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 2002, allows the licensing authority to take into account all convictions recorded against an applicant or the holder of a private hire vehicle or hackney carriage driver's licence, whether spent or not. Therefore, the licensing authority will have regard to all relevant convictions, particularly where there is a long history of offending or a recent pattern of repeat offending.
- 2.3 In this policy the term "disqualification" refers to the period served, in order to take account of the fact that a court may reduce the period of disqualification from driving. An applicant must provide evidence in

advance to prove that the court agreed a reduction in the period of disqualification.

3 Consideration of disclosed criminal history

3.1 Under the provisions of Sections 51, 55, and 59, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the licensing authority is required to ensure that an applicant for the grant or renewal of a hackney carriage and/or a private hire vehicle drivers' licence and/or private hire vehicle operators' licence is a 'fit and proper' person to hold such a licence. However, if an applicant has any convictions, warnings, cautions or charges awaiting trial, the licensing authority will look into:

- How relevant the offence(s) are to the licence being applied for
- The seriousness of the offence(s)
- When the offence(s) were committed
- The date of conviction
- Circumstances of the individual concerned
- Sentence imposed by the court
- The applicant's age at the time of conviction.
- Whether they form part of a pattern of offending
- Any other character check considered reasonable (e.g. personal references)
- Any other factors that might be relevant

3.2 Existing holders of drivers' licences are required to notify the licensing authority in writing within fourteen days of being arrested, receiving a driving licence endorsement, fixed penalty notice or criminal conviction (including cautions).

3.3 Applicants can discuss further what effect a caution/conviction may have on any application by contacting the licensing team in confidence for advice.

3.4 The licensing authority conducts enhanced disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) of any applicant for a driver licence. The licensing authority follows the DBS's Code of Practice on the fair use of disclosure information. A copy is available on request.

3.5 Applicants applying for the grant or a renewal of a drivers' licence will be required to obtain an enhanced disclosure at their expense. The licensing authority abides by the DBS's Policy on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information, which is available on request.

3.6 More information about the DBS can be found on their website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>.

- 3.7 The licensing authority is also entitled to use other records and information that may be available to it in determining applications or an entitlement to continue holding a licence. This may include information held by the licensing authority or other licensing authorities, and information disclosed by the police.
- 3.8 It is an offence for any person knowingly or recklessly to make a false declaration or to omit any material particular in giving information required by the application for a licence. Where an applicant has made a false statement or a false declaration on their application for the grant or renewal of a licence, the licence will normally be refused.

4 Serious offences involving violence

- 4.1 Licensed drivers have close regular contact with the public. A firm line is to be taken with those who have convictions for offences involving violence. An application will normally be refused if the applicant has a conviction for an offence that involved the loss of life.
- 4.2 Unless there are exceptional circumstances a licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:
- Murder
 - Manslaughter
 - Manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving
 - Terrorism offences
 - Or any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) offences which replace the above
- 4.3 A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence of similar offence(s) which replace the below offences and the conviction is less than 10 years prior to the date of application:
- Arson
 - Malicious wounding or grievous bodily harm which is racially aggravated
 - Actual bodily harm which is racially aggravated
 - Grievous bodily harm with intent
 - Robbery
 - Possession of firearm
 - Riot
 - Assault Police
 - Common assault with racially aggravated
 - Violent disorder
 - Resisting arrest
 - Or any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) offences which replace the above

4.4 A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence or similar offence(s) which replace the below offences and the conviction is less than 5 years prior to the date of application:

- Racially-aggravated criminal damage
- Racially-aggravated offence
- Common assault
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- Affray
- S5 Public Order Act 1986 offence (harassment, alarm or distress)
- S.4 Public Order Act 1986 offence (fear of provocation of violence)
- S4A Public Order Act 1986 offence (intentional harassment, alarm or distress)
- Obstruction
- Criminal damage
- Or any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) offences which replace the above

4.5 A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for an offence of a violent nature.

4.6 In the event of a licence being granted, a strict warning both verbally and in writing should be administered.

5. Possession of a weapon

5.1 If an applicant has been convicted of possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, this will give serious concern as to whether the person is fit to carry the public.

5.2 Depending on the circumstances of the offence, an applicant should be free of conviction for 3 years (or at least 3 years must have passed since the completion of the sentence, whichever is longer), before a licence is granted.

6. Sex and indecency offences

6.1 As licensed drivers often carry unaccompanied and vulnerable passengers, the licensing authority will take a strong line in relation to applicants or existing licence holders with convictions for sexual offences. All sexual and indecency offences will be considered as serious. Applicants with convictions for sexual or indecency offences that involve a third party will normally be refused a licence. Such offences include:

6.2 (a) An application will normally be refused where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Offences involving children or vulnerable adults
- Sexual assault
- Indecent assault
- Exploitation of prostitution
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation
- Possession of indecent photographs, child pornography etc.
- Indecent exposure
- Soliciting (kerb crawling)
- Or any sex or indecency offence that was committed in the course of employment as a taxi or PHV driver
- Or any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) offences which replace the above.

6.3 In addition to the above the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register.

7. Dishonesty

7.1 A licensed PHV or taxi driver is expected to be a trustworthy person. They deal with cash transactions and valuable property may be left in their vehicles. Taxi drivers are required to deposit such property with police within 24 hours. PHV drivers must pass lost property to the operator. The widespread practice of delivering unaccompanied property is indicative of the trust that business people place in licensed drivers. Moreover, it is comparatively easy for a dishonest driver to defraud the public by demanding more than the legal or agreed fare, etc. Overseas visitors can be confused by our currency and may be vulnerable to an unscrupulous driver. For all these reasons, a serious view is taken of any conviction involving dishonesty.

7.2 In general, a minimum period of 5 years free of conviction or at least 3 years from completion of sentence (whichever is longer) should be required before granting a licence. Offences involving dishonesty include:

- theft
- burglary
- fraud
- benefit fraud
- handling or receiving stolen goods
- forgery
- conspiracy to defraud
- obtaining money or property by deception
- other deception
- taking a vehicle without consent
- and any similar offences

- Or any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) offences which replace the above

7.3 A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a dishonesty offence.

7.4 Applicants or existing licence holders that are found to have intentionally misled the council, or lied as part of the application process, will not be issued with a licence.

8. Drugs

8.1 A serious view is taken of any drug related offence.

8.2 A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence related to the supply of drugs and has not been free of conviction for 5 years.

8.3 A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has more than one conviction for offences related to the possession of drugs and has not been free of conviction for 5 years.

8.4 An applicant who has an isolated conviction for an offence related to the possession of drugs (other than for supply) within the last 3-5 years may be granted a licence, but consideration should be given to the nature and quantity of the drugs.

8.5 If there is evidence of persistent drugs use, misuse or dependency a specialist medical examination (in accordance with DVLA Group 2 medical standards) may be required before the licence is granted. If the applicant was an addict then they would normally be required to show evidence of 5 years free from drug taking after detoxification treatment.

8.6 A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a drugs related offence.

9 Driving offences involving the loss of life

9.1 A very serious view is to be taken of any applicant who has been convicted of a driving offence that resulted in the loss of life. Unless there are exceptional circumstances a licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

- Causing death by dangerous driving
- Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs
- Causing death by driving: unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured drivers
- or any similar offences

10 Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs/using a mobile phone whilst driving

- 10.1 As licensees are professional vocational drivers, a serious view is taken of convictions for driving, or being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs. An isolated incident would not necessarily debar an applicant from proceeding on the restoration of their DVLA driving licence but they should be warned as to the significant risk to their licence status in the event of re-offending. Normally at least 3 years after the restoration of the driving licence following a drink/drug drive conviction should elapse before an application will be considered. If there is any suggestion that the applicant is alcohol or drug dependent, a satisfactory special medical report must be provided before the application can be allowed to proceed.
- 10.2 Applicants should also be aware of the serious risk posed by driving whilst using a mobile phone. There is a substantial body of research (see for instance <http://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/drivers/mobile-phone-report.pdf>) which shows that drivers who use a mobile phone suffer physical and cognitive distraction which means they:
- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
 - fail to see road signs
 - fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
 - are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front
 - react more slowly, take longer to brake and longer to stop
 - are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
 - feel more stressed and frustrated.
- 10.3 There is evidence to show that drivers who use a mobile phone have slower reaction times than those who have consumed up to the legal alcohol limit. In light of this, an equally serious view should be taken of convictions for driving whilst using a mobile phone as for driving under the influence of drink or drugs.
- 10.4 A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for an offence of driving under the influence of drink or drugs or whilst using a mobile phone.

11 Licensing offences

- 11.1 Certain offences under taxi legislation such as plying for hire, overcharging and refusing to carry disabled persons would normally prevent a licence being granted or renewed until a period of 3 years has passed since.

- 11.2 A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a licensing related offence.

12 Non-conviction information

- 12.1 If an applicant has, on more than one occasion, been arrested or charged, but not convicted, for a serious offence which suggests he could be a danger to the public, consideration should be given to refusing the application.
- 12.2 In assessing the action to take, the safety of the travelling public must be the paramount concern.

13 Cautions

- 13.1 Admission of guilt is required before a caution can be issued. Every case will be considered on its own merits including the details and nature of the offence.

14 Once a licence has been granted

- 14.1 If a licence holder's conduct is such that, were they to be applying for a new licence their application would normally be refused, they should expect consideration to be given as to the suspension or revocation of their licence.
- 14.2 A suspension or revocation of the licence of a driver takes effect at the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the day on which notice is given to the driver. If it appears that the interests of public safety require the suspension or revocation of the licence to have immediate effect, and the notice given to the driver includes a statement that is so and an explanation why, the suspension or revocation takes effect when the notice is given to the driver. [Road Safety Act 2006, s 52, 2A&2B]
- 14.3 A suspension or revocation of the licence of an operator takes effect at the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the day on which notice is given to the operator.

15 Licences issued by other licensing authorities

- 15.1 Applicants who hold a licence with one licensing authority should not automatically assume that their application will be granted by another. Each case will be decided on its own merits.
- 15.2 Licensees who are licensed by multiple authorities are expected to inform all such authorities of the authorities that they are licensed by and to advise each authority of any changes in this respect; and should expect those authorities to share information regarding their conduct and to take it into account as appropriate.

16 Minor traffic offences

- 16.1 Convictions for minor traffic offences will not prevent a person from being considered for a licence. If a new applicant has six live penalty points on their driving licence for such offences then the application may be granted subject to a strong written warning. If an applicant has more than six penalty points on their licence then the application will normally be refused and no further application will be considered until a period of at least 12 months free from convictions of this type has elapsed.
- 16.2 In the case of a licensed driver accumulating nine or more penalty points the Council may refuse to renew, suspend or revoke the licence. If a licence is revoked, no further application will be considered until a period of at least 12 months free from convictions of this type has elapsed. A list of minor traffic offences can be seen in table 1.

17 Major traffic offences

- 17.1 If an applicant has live endorsements or has been disqualified from driving in respect of major traffic offences then the application will be normally be refused until at least five years after the most recent such convictions.

If however the conviction is also listed in the preceding part of this appendix, then the longer period shall normally be applied.

A list of major traffic offences can be seen in table 2.

18 Offences by licensed drivers, proprietors or operators

- 18.1 Any conviction which results from an offence committed by any person whilst working as a hackney carriage or private hire driver, proprietor or operator (especially the offence of illegally plying for hire) is regarded as extremely serious and may lead to a licence being suspended or revoked or an application to renew the licence being refused.
- 18.2 More than one conviction for the above would certainly lead to the licence being revoked. This includes any offences against the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or any breach of the conditions or byelaws made under the relevant legislation.
- 18.3 Convictions of any description listed in table 1 committed by both hackney carriage proprietors and private hire driver's during the duration of their licence must be declared to the licensing section in writing within 14 days of the conviction, caution, or fixed penalty.

19 Cautions and Endorsable Fixed Penalties

- 19.1 For the purpose of these guidelines simple cautions and endorsable fixed penalties shall be treated as though they were convictions.

20 Summary

- 20.1 To summarise, a criminal history in itself will not automatically result in refusal and a current conviction for a serious crime need not bar an applicant permanently from becoming licensed. As the preceding paragraphs indicate, in most cases, an applicant would be expected to remain free from conviction for 3 to 10 years, according to circumstances, before an application can be considered. However, there may be occasions when an application can be allowed before 3 years free from conviction have elapsed.
- 20.2 Any person who has committed an offence and has to wait before an application is positively considered is more likely to value their licence and act accordingly.
- 20.3 While it is possible that an applicant may have a number of convictions that, individually, meet the above guidelines, the overall offending history must be considered when assessing an applicant's suitability to be licensed. A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction. Obviously some discretion can be afforded if an offence disclosed is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances, but the overriding consideration is the protection of the public.

Table 1: Minor traffic offences

Code	Offence
CU10	Using vehicle with defective brakes
CU20	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of use or unsuitable vehicle or using a vehicle with parts or accessories (excluding brakes, steering or tyres) in a dangerous condition
CU30	Using a vehicle with defective tyres
CU40	Using a vehicle with defective steering
CU50	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of load or passengers
SP10	Exceeding goods vehicle speed limit
SP20	Exceeding speed limit for type of vehicle (excluding goods or passenger vehicles)
SP30	Exceeding statutory speed limit on a public road
SP40	Exceeding passenger vehicle speed limit
SP50	Exceeding speed limit on a motorway
SP60	Exceeding speed limit offence
MS10	Leaving a vehicle in a dangerous position
MS20	Unlawful pillion riding
MS30	Play street offences

Code	Offence
MS40	Driving with uncorrected defective eyesight or refusing to submit to a test
MS70	Driving with uncorrected defective eyesight
MS80	Refusing to submit to an eyesight test
MS90	Failure to give information as to identity of driver, etc.
MW10	Contravention of special road regulations (excluding speed limit)
PC10	Undefined contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations
PC20	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with moving vehicle
PC30	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with stationary vehicle
TS10	Failing to comply with traffic light signals
TS20	Failing to comply with double white lines
TS30	Failing to comply with a 'stop' sign
TS40	Failing to comply with direction of a constable or traffic warden
TS50	Failing to comply with traffic sign (excluding "stop" sign, traffic lights or double white lines)
TS60	Failing to comply with school crossing patrol sign
TS70	Undefined failure to comply with a traffic direction sign

NOTE: Includes: Aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring any of the offences as coded above. Causing or permitting any of the offences as coded above. Inciting any of the offences as coded above.

Table 2: Major traffic offences

Code	Offence
AC10	Failing to stop after an accident
AC20	Failing to give particulars or to report an accident within 24 hours
AC30	Undefined accident offences
BA10	Driving while disqualified by order of the court
BA30	Attempting to drive while disqualified by order of the court
CD10	Driving without due care and attention
CD20	Driving without reasonable consideration for other road users
CD30	Driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users
CD40	Causing death through careless driving when unfit through drink
CD50	Causing death through careless driving when unfit through drugs
CD60	Causing death through careless driving with alcohol above limit
CD70	Causing death by careless driving then failing to supply a specimen for analysis
CD71	Causing death by careless driving then failing to supply a specimen for drug analysis

Code	Offence
DD40	Dangerous driving
DD60	Manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving a vehicle
DD80	Causing death by dangerous driving
DR10	Driving or attempting to drive with alcohol level above limit
DR20	Driving or attempting to drive while unfit through drink
DR30	Driving or attempting to drive then failing to supply a specimen for analysis
DR31	Driving or attempting to drive then failing to supply a specimen for drug analysis
DR40	In charge of a vehicle while alcohol level above limit
DR50	In charge of a vehicle while unfit through drink
DR60	Failure to provide a specimen for analysis in circumstances other than driving or attempting to drive
DR61	Failure to supply drug specimen for analysis in circumstances driving or to drive
DR70	Failing to provide specimen for breath test
DR80	Driving or attempting to drive when unfit through drugs
DR90	In charge of a vehicle when unfit through drugs
IN10	Using a vehicle uninsured against third-party risks

Code	Offence
LC20	Driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence
LC30	Driving after making a false declaration about fitness when applying for a licence
LC40	Driving a vehicle having failed to notify a disability
LC50	Driving after a licence has been revoked or refused on medical grounds
MS50	Motor racing on the highway
MS60	Offences not covered by other codes
UT50	Aggravated taking of a vehicle

NOTE: Includes: Aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring any of the offences as coded above. Causing or permitting any of the offences as coded above. Inciting any of the offences as coded above.

Appendix F - Hackney Carriage Byelaws

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Byelaws are made under section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and section 171 of the Public Health Act 1875.
- 1.2 The following byelaws were confirmed for Ashford Borough Council effective 2nd November 1998.

2 Interpretation

- 2.1 Throughout these byelaws “the Council” means the Ashford Borough Council and “the district” means Ashford.

3. Provisions regulating the manner in which the number of each hackney carriage corresponding with the number of its licence shall be displayed.

- 3.1
 - a) The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause the number of the licence granted to him in respect of the carriage to be legibly painted or marked on the outside and inside of the carriage, or on plates affixed thereto
 - b) A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall:
 - Not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer any such number to be concealed from public view while the carriage is standing or plying for hire
 - Not cause or permit the carriage to stand or ply for hire with any such painting, marking or plate so defaced that any figure or material particular is illegible

4. Provisions regulating how hackney carriages are to be furnished or provided.

- 4.1 The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall:
 - Provide sufficient means by which any person in the carriage may communicate with the driver
 - Cause the roof or covering to be kept water-tight
 - Provide any necessary windows and a means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side
 - Cause the seats to be properly cushioned or covered

- Cause the floor to be provided with a proper carpet, mat, or other suitable covering
- Cause the fittings and furniture generally to be kept in a clean condition, well maintained and in every way fit for public service
- Provide means for securing luggage if the carriage is so constructed as to carry luggage
- Provide an efficient fire extinguisher which shall be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use
- Provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in such carriage and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver

4.2 The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause the same to be provided with a taximeter so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the following requirements, that is to say:

- The taximeter shall be fitted with a key, flag, or other device the turning of which will bring the machinery of the taximeter into action and cause the word "HIRED" to appear on the face of the taximeter
- Such key, flag, or other device shall be capable of being locked in such a position that the machinery of the taximeter is not in action and that no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter
- When the machinery of the taximeter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the taximeter in clearly legible figures a fare not exceeding the rate or fare which the proprietor or driver is entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage by distance and time in pursuance of the tariff fixed by the Council
- The word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon
- The taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof are at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the carriage; and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring
- The taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances

- 5. Provisions regulating the conduct of the proprietors and drivers of hackney carriages plying within the district in their several employments, and determining whether such drivers shall wear any and what badges.**
- 5.1 The driver of a hackney carriage provided with a taximeter shall:
- When standing or plying for hire, keep the key, flag or other device fitted in pursuance of the byelaw in that behalf locked in the position in which no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter
 - Before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the said key, flag, or other device, so that the word "HIRED" is legible on the face of the taximeter and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring
 - Cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of a hiring which is between half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise and also at any other time at the request of the hirer
- 5.2 A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not tamper with or permit any person to tamper with any taximeter with which the carriage is provided, with the fittings thereof, or with the seals affixed thereto.
- 5.3 The driver of a hackney carriage shall, when plying for hire in any street and not actually hired:
- Proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands appointed by the Council
 - If a stand, at the time of his arrival is occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, proceed to another stand
 - On arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, station the carriage immediately behind the carriage or carriages on the stand and so as to face in the same direction
 - From time to time when any other carriage immediately in front is driven off or moved forward cause his carriage to be moved forward so as to fill the place previously occupied by the carriage driven off or moved forward
- 5.4 The driver of a hackney carriage shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.

- 5.5 The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage who has agreed or has been hired to be in attendance with the carriage at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such carriage at such appointed time and place.
- 5.6 A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such carriage any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the carriage.
- 5.7 If a badge has been provided by the Council and delivered to the driver of a hackney carriage he shall, when standing or plying for hire, and when hired, wear that badge in such position and manner as to be plainly visible.
- 5.8 The driver of a hackney carriage so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by any person hiring or seeking to hire the carriage:
- Convey a reasonable quantity of luggage
 - Afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading
 - Afford reasonable assistance in removing it to, or from, the entrance of any building, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such person
- 6. Provisions fixing the rates or fares to be paid for hackney carriages within the district and securing the due publication of such fares.**
- 6.1 The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall be entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage the rate or fare prescribed by the Council, the rate or fare being calculated by distance and time, unless the hirer expresses at the commencement of the hiring his desire to engage by time.
- 6.2 Provided always that, where a hackney carriage furnished with a taximeter shall be hired by distance and time, the proprietor or driver thereof shall not be entitled to demand and take a fare greater than that recorded on the face of the taximeter, save for any extra charges authorised by the Council which it may not be possible to record on the face of the taximeter.
- 6.3 The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause a statement of the fares fixed by Council Resolution to be exhibited inside the carriage, in clearly distinguishable letters and figures.

- 6.4 The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage bearing a statement of fares in accordance with this byelaw shall not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer the letters or figures in the statement to be concealed or rendered illegible at any time while the carriage is plying or being used for hire.
- 7. Provisions securing the safe custody and re-delivery of any property accidentally left in hackney carriages and fixing the charges to be made in respect thereof.**
- 7.1 The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall immediately after the termination of any hiring, or as soon as practicable thereafter, carefully search the carriage for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.
- 7.2 The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall, if any property accidentally left therein by any person who may have been conveyed in the carriage be found by or handed to him:
- Carry it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours, if not sooner claimed by or on behalf of its owner, to the office of the Environmental Services Manager of the Council and leave it in the custody of the Officer in charge of the office on his giving a receipt for it
 - Be entitled to receive from any person to whom the property shall be re-delivered an amount equal to five pence in the pound of its estimated value (or the fare for the distance from the place of finding to the office of Environmental Services Manager of the Council, whichever be the greater) but not more than five pounds

8 Penalties

- 8.1 Every person who shall offend against any of these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale and in the case of a continuing offence to a further fine not exceeding two pounds for each day during which the offence continues after conviction thereafter.

9. Repeal of Byelaws

- 9.1 The byelaws relating to hackney carriages which were made by the Ashford Borough Council on the 18th day of March 1975 and which were confirmed by one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State on the 9th day of May 1975 are hereby repealed.

Appendix G - Private Hire Drivers Licence Conditions

1 Conduct of Drivers

- 1.1 The driver shall not accept any person as a passenger in a private hire vehicle unless the passenger or someone on their behalf previously requested the hiring by telephone, letter or personal call to the office or business premises of the proprietor/operator.
- 1.2 The driver shall not permit an order or request for a hiring to be transmitted by means of a radio set installed in a licensed private hire vehicle.
- 1.3 When picking up or setting down passengers, the driver shall not cause their vehicle to remain stationary for a longer period of time than is reasonably necessary to enable them to carry out those operations.
- 1.4 The driver shall not by calling out or otherwise, importune any person to hire such a vehicle and shall not make use of the services of any other person for that purpose.
- 1.5 The driver who has agreed or has been hired to be in attendance with the vehicle at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such vehicle at such appointed time and place.
- 1.6 The driver must take all reasonable steps to ensure that there is no radio scanning equipment in the vehicle at any time.
- 1.7 The driver of a private hire vehicle shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.
- 1.8 The driver of a private hire vehicle, so constructed as to carry luggage, shall, when required by any person hiring or seeking to hire the vehicle:
 - Convey a reasonable quantity or weight of luggage
 - Afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading
 - Afford reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any house, station or place at which he may take up or set down such person
- 1.9 The driver shall, when hired to drive to any particular destination, subject to any directions given by the hirer, proceed to that destination by the shortest available route.

1.10 Whilst acting as a private hire driver in a private hire vehicle the driver shall:

- At all times be clean and respectable in their dress and person and comply with the dress code (see Appendix L) and code of conduct (see Appendix H)
- Not without the express consent of the hirer drink or eat in the vehicle whilst a hiring is under way

2 Custody of property accidentally left in a Private Hire Vehicle

2.1 The driver shall immediately after the termination of any hiring or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.

2.2 The driver of a private hire vehicle shall, if any property accidentally left therein by any person who may have been conveyed in the vehicle has been found by or handed to them, attempt to return it to the rightful owner or carry it within 24 hours, if not sooner, to the nearest Police Station and leave it in the custody of the person in charge and obtain a receipt for it.

3 Miscellaneous

3.1 This licence must not be handed to any unauthorised person but must be produced on request by any authorised officer of the Council, or any Police Officer.

3.2 In the event of loss or damage to this licence the Council must be informed immediately so that a replacement licence can be issued.

3.3 The licence must not be defaced or altered in any way.

3.4 The driver shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address within 14 days.

3.5 The driver, if they drive licensed vehicles belonging to another person, must ensure that they lodge their private hire driver's licence with the proprietor of the licensed vehicle until they ceases to drive for that proprietor.

3.6 The driver will be issued with a driver's identity badge which must be worn at all times in such a position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible whilst in charge of a private hire vehicle. The driver's identity badge must be produced on request by any authorised officer of the Council or any Police officer.

- 3.7 The driver must produce their DVLA driving licence to the Council within seven days of a written request for production being made.
- 3.8 The driver shall not carry more than the maximum number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed.
- 3.9 The driver shall not drive a licensed vehicle unless a first aid kit and an easily accessible and compliant fire extinguisher are carried in the vehicle.
- 3.10 The driver must sign this licence on receipt.
- 3.11 The driver must notify the council within the 14 days of any of the following:
- a) The driver's conviction for any criminal or road traffic offence (including fixed penalty offences)
 - b) Any grant of bail to the driver (conditional or unconditional) by any court or police station
 - c) Any court cases pending against the driver
 - d) Whether the driver has been cautioned or received an official warning from the police
- 3.12 The driver shall disclose to the Council in writing, within five days, details of any serious illness or injury (for example, head injury, heart attack, stroke, broken limbs, diabetes, etc.) sustained and may be required to undergo an additional medical examination or produce written confirmation from their own medical practitioner or hospital consultant as to their continued fitness.
- 3.13 Each driver must carry, in a licensed private hire vehicle, a guide, hearing or other assistance dog belonging to a passenger, free of charge unless the driver has a proven medical condition that would preclude such action. Licensed drivers have a responsibility to ensure that the proprietor they drive for is aware of such condition when they are first employed. The dog must be allowed to remain with the passenger.
- 3.14 Where reference is made to produce documents or report matters to the Council these should be sent/reported to the Licensing Officer, Environmental Services, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL.

Appendix H - Code of Conduct for Licensed Drivers/Operators

- 1 The aim of licensing the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle trade is, primarily, to protect the public as well as to ensure that the public have reasonable access to these services, because of the part they play in local transport provision. Licence holders shall promote the professionalism of the hackney carriage and private hire trade by:
 - a) Complying with this Code of Conduct
 - b) Complying with all the conditions of their licence, byelaws and the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy
 - c) Behaving in a civil, orderly and responsible manner at all times, including being polite, helpful and fair to passengers and whilst waiting for hire on a rank
 - d) Paying attention to personal hygiene and dress so as to present a professional image to the public. (See Dress Code)
 - e) Not eating or drinking in the vehicle in the presence of customers
 - f) Keep their vehicles clean and suitable for Hire to the public at all times
 - g) Respecting authorised Officers during their normal course of their duties
 - h) Maintain their vehicles in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times
 - i) Not consume alcohol immediately before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle
 - j) Not drive while having misused legal or taken illegal drugs
 - k) Comply with legislation regarding the length of working hours
 - l) Drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians
 - m) Not use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving
 - n) Obey all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all times
 - o) Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers conveyed in, entering or alighting from the vehicle

- p) Not smoke in the vehicle at any time
- q) Attend punctually when undertaking pre-booked hires
- r) Assist, where necessary, passengers into and out of vehicles.
(Unless granted exemption by the Council under the Equality Act 2010)
- s) Provide passengers reasonable assistance with luggage
- t) Not sound the horn or other audible warning instrument on the vehicle, other than in accordance with the Highway Code, to attract the attention of passengers
- u) Keep the volume of music media players, VHF radios and/or other audio/visual devices to a minimum
- v) Switch off the engine if required to wait
- w) Take whatever additional action is necessary to avoid disturbance to residents in the locality
- x) Rank in an orderly manner and proceed along the rank in order and promptly close up spaces so that other carriages can join the rank
- y) Not allow their music media players, VHF radios and/or other audio/visual devices to cause disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood at lay up points and at taxi offices
- z) Take whatever additional action is necessary to avoid disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood, which might arise from the conduct of their business

2 Disciplinary Hearings

- 2.1 Drivers should be aware of the powers the Council has to take action, by way of suspension, revocation or refusal to renew a driver's licences:
- a) Where the driver has been convicted, since the grant of the licence, of a relevant offence.
 - b) Where the driver has been convicted of an offence under the legislation or the Taxi Licensing Policy relating to taxi regulation
 - c) If there is any others reasons to do so, including a breach of condition or this code

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 had any alcohol or having misused any drugs whilst in charge of a licensed vehicle.

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Appendix I - Private Hire Operator's Licence Conditions

1 Provision and Furnishings of Private Hire Vehicles

- 1.1 The operator shall ensure that at all times the vehicle including its seating, vehicle including its seating, flooring and fittings are kept in a clean and tidy condition and if in the reasonable opinion of the Council's Licensing Officer a lack of cleanliness and/or tidiness is such as to render its use by the public undesirable he shall notify the proprietor thereof whereupon the proprietor shall not use or cause or permit the use of the vehicle as a private hire vehicle until such time as the Licensing Officer has re-inspected the vehicle and confirmed it is clean and tidy.

2 Display of Licence Plates, Signs and Advertising

- 2.1 The operator shall ensure that the licence plate issued and allocated by the Council is affixed to the outside of the carriage, on or adjacent to the rear bumper, or in such other position as may be approved by the Licensing Officer.

- 2.2 The operator shall ensure maintenance of such licence plate in a clean and legible condition and shall inform the Council immediately should it be lost or broken or become defaced.

- The operator may display on the outside or inside of the vehicle the following: Private hire car sign (which may be issued by the Council) on the windscreen
- Vehicle Licence plate
- Approved Kent County Council (KCC) School Transport Sign when operating in conjunction with school contracts and
- Any other thing required to be displayed by law

- 2.3 The operator may display restricted first party advertising subject to the following restrictions:

- The advertising material shall be restricted to the metal surface of the drivers and front passengers' doors. If advertising material is to be displayed, it must include the words "Advance Booking Only" or "Private Hire Advance Booking Only". It can include the proprietor's company name, logo, website, email address or telephone number
- The advertising material shall not contain the words "Taxi", "Hackney", "Cab" or "For Hire". This restriction includes the use of the words when used within the proprietor's company name, log,

website or email address

- The advertising material shall be non-reflective
- Nothing shall be advertised which might reasonably cause offence to members of the public

2.4 The operator shall not display on the outside or inside of the vehicle in such a manner to be conspicuous from the outside any other signs, telephone numbers or other advertising material.

3 Records

a. The operator shall keep a permanent record of every booking of a private hire vehicle invited and accepted by them, whether direct from the hirer or by undertaking the bookings at the request of another operator. The records shall be made available for inspection by the Council's Licensing Officer upon request. The record entries must be made before the commencement of each journey and shall include:

- The time and date of the booking
- The time and date of the pickup
- Details of the pickup point
- Details of the destination
- The name and contact details (minimum tel. number) of the hirer
- The registration number of the vehicle and driver allocated for the journey

b. All records kept by the operator pursuant to Condition 3.1 above shall be preserved for a period of not less than twelve months following the date of the relevant entry.

c. The operator shall keep written records of the particulars of all private hire vehicles operated by them and shall include a copy of the licensed driver's private hire licence, details of the proprietors, registration number and drivers of such vehicles together with any radio call sign used.

d. The Operator will securely retain the licenses of all drivers engaged to work for them and make them available for inspection as required.

4 Conduct of Proprietors

- 4.1 The operator shall not accept any person as a passenger in a private hire vehicle unless the passenger or someone on their behalf previously requested the hiring by telephone, letter, email, text or personal call to the office or business premises of the proprietor.
- 3.2 The operator shall not permit an order or request for a hiring to be transmitted by means of a radio set installed in a licensed private hire vehicle, from a private hire vehicle to an operator.
- 3.3 The operator shall not by calling out or otherwise, importune any person to hire such a vehicle and shall not make use of the services of any other person for that purpose.
- 4.4 Comply with the Code of Conduct.

5 Miscellaneous

- 5.1 The operator shall notify the Council forthwith should he/she change address.
- 5.2 The operator shall notify the Council forthwith of any intended change in use of a licensed vehicle, or of any relevant change of particulars supplied at the time of application for this licence.
- 5.3 This licence must be kept in the possession of the operator and must not be passed to any unauthorised person. It must be produced when requested by any authorised officer of the Council or any police officer.
- 5.4 In the event of loss or damage to this licence the Licensing Section must be informed immediately so that a replacement licence can be issued.
- 5.5 This licence must not be altered or defaced in any way.
- 5.6 The operator must take all reasonable steps to ensure that there is no radio scanning equipment in the vehicle at any time.
- 5.7 Since 2001 private hire vehicles must carry guide, hearing or other assistance dogs belonging to passengers, free of charge, unless a driver has a proven medical condition that would preclude such action. Licensed drivers have a responsibility to ensure that the proprietor they drive for is aware of such condition when they are first employed. The dog must be allowed to remain with the passenger.
- 5.8 If you wish to operate a greater number of vehicles than permitted under your licence, you will need to apply for a new operator's licence with payment of the appropriate fee, and submit your original licence to

be surrendered upon grant of the new licence. You would not be entitled to any refund in respect of the surrendered licence.

- 5.9 No person or corporate or incorporated body may hold more than one operator's licence.

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Appendix J - Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policy and Procedure

1 Enforcement Policy Statement

- 1.1 It is the policy of Ashford Borough Council to ensure that taxi drivers and operators are licensed correctly and carry out their trade in accordance with both the relevant law and the conditions attached to the licences.
- 1.2 All enforcement action, be it verbal warnings, the issue of written warnings, statutory notices, appearance before the sub-committee or prosecution, will primarily be based upon the seriousness of the breach and the possible consequences arising out of it. Enforcement action will not, therefore, constitute a punitive response to minor technical contraventions of legislation.
- 1.3 Authorised officers, when making enforcement decisions, will abide by this policy. Any departure from the policy must be exceptional, capable of justification, be fully considered and be endorsed by the Licensing Team Leader or above before the decision is taken (unless it is considered that there is significant risk to the public in delaying the decision).
- 1.4 Authorised officers must be fully acquainted with the requirements of the policy and appropriate training will be provided where required.
- 1.5 Officers will be authorised by the Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety or the Health, Parking and Community Safety Managers (as appropriate) to take enforcement actions relevant and appropriate to their level of competence. Competency will be assessed individually by reference to qualifications and experience.

2 Enforcement Options

- 2.1 Achieving and maintaining a consistency of approach to making all decisions that concern taxi licensing and enforcement action, including prosecution, is of paramount importance. To achieve and maintain consistency, it is vital that the policy guidelines are always considered and followed where appropriate.
- 2.2 Licence application and enforcement decisions must always be consistent, balanced, fair and relate to common standards, which ensure that the public is adequately protected. In reaching any decision many criteria must be considered including the:
 - Seriousness of any offences

- Driver or operator's past history
- Consequence of non-compliance
- Likely effectiveness of the various enforcement options
- Danger to the public

2.3 Having considered all relevant information and evidence, the choices for action are:

Licence Applications:

- Grant licences subject to the Council's Standard Conditions
- Refuse to grant a licence

Enforcement Action:

- Take no action
- Take informal action
- Use statutory notices, (stop notices etc.)
- Suspend a licence
- Revoke a licence
- Use simple cautions
- Prosecute

2.4 This policy document provides detailed guidance applicable to the various options for enforcement action.

3 Informal Action

3.1 Informal action to secure compliance with legislation includes offering advice, verbal and written warnings and requests for action and the use of letters.

3.2 Such informal enforcement action may be appropriate in any of the following circumstances:

- The act or omission is not serious enough to warrant more formal action
- From the individual driver or operator's past history it can be reasonably expected that informal action will achieve compliance

- Confidence in the operator's management is high
- The consequences of non-compliance will not pose a significant risk to the safety of the public

Even where some of the above criteria are not met, there may be circumstances in which informal action will be more effective than a formal approach.

4 Appearance before the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee

- 4.1 An offending individual or company may be summoned before the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee to answer allegations of breaches of relevant legislation, Byelaws or conditions attached to licences.
- 4.2 Current licence holders who report convictions or breach relevant legislation during the period of their licence may be brought before the Committee.
- 4.3 The Committee may decide to take one or more of the following actions:
 - No action
 - A written warning
 - Require the production of driving licences or other specified documentation at the Council's Office
 - Suspend a licence
 - Revoke a licence
 - Recommend prosecution action

5 Section 68 Notices

- 5.1 An authorised officer may serve notice in writing for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle or the taximeter affixed to such vehicle to be examined at the Council's appointed garage at a time specified in the notice. This notice must only be served having had due regard to the condition of the vehicle or with reasonable grounds to suspect the accuracy of the taximeter. An authorised officer may, in addition to requiring the vehicle to be tested, suspend the vehicle licence until such time as he is satisfied with the condition of the hackney carriage or private hire vehicle. This action will only be taken when he has

reasonable grounds to suspect that the condition of the vehicle is an immediate danger to passenger and/or other road users.

6 Appeals

- 6.1 Appeals against decisions of the Council may be made to the Appeal's Committee and to the Magistrates' Court.
- 6.2 Any notifications of enforcement actions will include written information on how to appeal. This will explain how, where and within what period an appeal may be brought and on what grounds and will confirm that the enforcement action is suspended pending the outcome of the appeal.

7 Prosecution

- 7.1 The decision to prosecute is a very significant one. Prosecution will, in general, be restricted to those circumstances where the law is blatantly disregarded, legitimate instructions of the Council are not followed and / or the public is put at serious risk. Such circumstances are, however, in a minority. It is important that the criteria on which a decision to prosecute is made provide common standards that ensure a consistent approach.
- 7.2 The circumstances that are likely to warrant prosecution may be characterised by one or more of the following:
- Where there is a blatant disregard for the law, particularly where the economic advantages of breaking the law are substantial and the law-abiding are placed at a disadvantage to those who disregard it
 - When there appears to have been reckless disregard for the safety of passengers or other road users
 - Where there have been repeated breaches of legal requirements
 - Where a particular type of offence is prevalent
 - Where a particular contravention has caused serious public alarm
- 7.3 When circumstances have been identified which may warrant a prosecution, all relevant evidence and information must be considered, to enable a consistent, fair and objective decision to be made.
- 7.4 Before referring a matter to the Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety or the Health, Parking and Community Safety Managers (as appropriate) for possible prosecution, the Licensing Team Leader as well as the Council's Legal & Democratic Services Manager must be satisfied that there is relevant, admissible, substantial and reliable

evidence that an offence has been committed by an identifiable person or company. There must be a realistic prospect of conviction; a bare prima facie case is not enough. With insufficient evidence to prosecute, the issue of a simple caution is not an alternative.

7.5 When a decision is being taken on whether to prosecute, the factors to be considered may include:

- The seriousness of the alleged offence
- The risk or harm to the public
- Identifiable victims
- Failure to comply with a statutory notice served for a significant breach of legislation
- Disregard of safety for financial reward
- The previous history of the party concerned
- Offences following a history of similar offences
- Failure to respond positively to past warnings
- The ability of any important witnesses and their willingness to cooperate
- The willingness of the party to prevent a recurrence of the problem
- The probable public benefit of a prosecution and the importance of the case e.g. whether it might establish a legal precedent. (As indicated above, advice on the public interest is contained in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The general thrust of the advice contained therein is that, the graver the offence, the less likelihood there will be that the public interest will allow anything other than a prosecution)
- Whether other action, such as issuing a simple caution in accordance with the Home Office Circular 18/1994 would be more appropriate or effective

8 Simple Cautions

8.1 A simple caution may be used as an alternative to a prosecution in certain circumstances.

8.2 Home Office Circular 18/1994 states that the purposes of the simple caution are:

- To deal quickly and simply with less serious offences
 - To divert less serious offences away from the Courts
 - To reduce the chances of repeat offences
- 8.3 To safeguard the suspected offender's interests, the following conditions should be fulfilled before a caution is administered
- There must be evidence of the suspected offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction
 - The suspected offender must admit the offence
 - The suspected offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give informed consent to being cautioned
- 8.4 If there is insufficient evidence to consider taking a prosecution, then by implication, the criteria is not satisfied for the use of a simple caution. A simple caution should also not be used where the suspected offender does not make a clear and reliable admission of the offence. (It should be noted that there is no legal obligation for any person to accept the offer of a simple caution and no pressure should be applied to the person to accept a caution).
- 8.5 Simple cautions must be used in accordance with the Home Office Circular and may only be issued by the Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety or the Health, Parking and Community Safety Managers (as appropriate).
- 8.6 Where a person declines the offer of a simple caution, it will be necessary to consider taking alternative enforcement action. Whilst this will probably mean prosecution, this is not necessarily inevitable. For example, it may be considered that a written warning would be appropriate.

9 Transparency

- 9.1 Following the completion of an investigation into a complaint or any enforcement activity, the licence holder will be informed of the action intended to be taken.
- 9.2 Any written documentation issued or sent will:
- Contain all the information necessary to understand the offence and what needs to be done to rectify it. Where works are required, the period allowed for them to be completed will be indicated

- Indicate the legislation or conditions contravened and measures which will enable compliance with the legal requirements and point out, where appropriate, that other means of achieving the same effect may be chosen
- Clearly indicate any recommendations of good practice under an appropriate heading, to show that they are not a legal requirement

9.3 The clear distinction between legal requirements and matters that are recommended as good practice in all enforcement action, even if only giving verbal advice, is vitally important.

10 Test Purchase/Secret Shopper

10.1 The Council will from time to time conduct Test Purchase/Secret Shopper operations as a quality control measure with regard to licensing.

10.2 The purpose of these operations is to provide the best possible service to the public, investigate complaints from the public and drivers alike and to highlight best practice.

Appendix K - Penalty Points System

- 1 The penalty points system outlined below identifies a number of breaches of conditions, byelaws and/or statutory provisions. It then indicates the number of points to be invoked should the breach be proven. The implementation of points would take place following investigation of offences or receipt of formal proceedings elsewhere by another agency e.g. the police.
 - 1.1 Penalty points will only be imposed where the licensee agrees the breach or offence has taken place. Where the licensee does not agree that the breach or offence has taken place the only option available to the Council will be to prosecute, or review their fitness to hold the relevant licence.
- 2 **The details of how the scheme will be operated are as follows:**
 - 2.1 Penalty points will be applied by authorised officers of the Council upon completion of investigation of relevant breaches of the Council's hackney carriage and private hire conditions or other relevant statutory provisions where breaches are identified.
 - 2.2 Penalty points when issued will be confirmed in writing to the licence holder.
 - 2.3 The number of penalty points issued will be in accordance with the tariff, reproduced below.
 - 2.4 The Council retains the discretion to issue penalty points to drivers, driver/proprietors and operators for a single contravention if the circumstances warrant it i.e. the breach is one against all these licences and it is considered joint responsibility is held.
 - 2.5 The imposition of penalty points against a driver who is an employee will not necessarily result in additional imposition of points to their employer or operator.
 - 2.6 Penalty points issued under this scheme will have a "life" of twelve months, and then will be deemed spent. The system is based upon a rolling twelve-month period.
 - 2.7 There is no financial penalty associated with the system, and the licensee may continue to work. However, the licensee will be asked to attend a Licensing and Health and Safety Committee hearing if more than a certain number of points are imposed on an individual licence in any one 12 month period. The thresholds are as follows:

Penalty Points Tariff

Hackney Carriage Driver	12 Points
Hackney Carriage Proprietor	12 Points
Private Hire Driver	12 Points
Private Hire Proprietor	12 Points
Private Hire Operator	24 Points

- 3 On appearing before the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee the following recommendations will generally be made by Officers.**
- 3.1 On the accumulation of 12 or more penalty points in a 12-month period a driver or a vehicle proprietor will be subject to a recommendation to suspend their licence for a period of 1 month.
- 3.2 On the accumulation of 24 or more penalty points in a 12 month period an Operator will be subject to a recommendation to suspend their licence for a period of 1 month.
- 3.3 Drivers, proprietors, or operators who accumulate the necessary total of points in a rolling year on a second or subsequent occasion, will be asked to reappear before the Committee. The Committee will take into account previous cautions, suspensions or prosecutions when considering Officer's recommendation for a longer period of suspension, or revocation of the relevant licence.
- 3.4 The above recommendations would not fetter the discretion of the Committee who may always decide to take no further action, to suspend the licence for any period, or to revoke a licence.
- 3.5 Once prosecuted or suspended all penalty points will be removed from the total accrued for that year by drivers, vehicle proprietors, and operators.
- 3.6 Any driver or vehicle proprietor or operator subject to suspension or revocation has the right of appeal to the Appeals Committee and to the Magistrates' Court against the suspension or revocation. All

suspensions will therefore be subject to a 21-day appeals period prior to implementation to allow for the formal appeals process.

4 Penalty Point Tariff

PH - Private Hire, HC -Hackney Carriage

- 4.1 Matters identified with an asterisk (*) are direct contraventions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or other statutory requirements.
- 4.2 Matters identified with “C” are breaches of conditions imposed on the licence. Matters identified with “B” are breaches of the Byelaws.
- 4.3 Some offences marked (HC) apply only to hackney carriages.

4.4 General Breaches

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
1.	False declaration on application/renewal of licence	*	6	4	4
2.	Obstruction of authorised officer	*	3	3	3
3.	Failure to behave in a civil and orderly manner to customers.	C/B	3		
4.	PH Driver failing to notify any motoring, criminal conviction, pending court case, or caution within 14 days	C	3		
5.	Failure to display badge in such position as to be plainly visible	B/*	4		

6.	Failure by HC Proprietor, PH driver or Operator to notify the Council of change of address within 7 days	*/C	2	2	2
7.	Smoking and/or failing to prevent smoking in licensed vehicle	Health Act	3		
8.	Failure to display required no smoking signs	Health Act		3	3
9.	Failure to comply with the Code Of Conduct and/or the Dress Code	C	3	3	3

4.5 Vehicle Breaches

PH - Private Hire, HC -Hackney Carriage

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
10.	No fire extinguisher in vehicle.	B/C		3	3
11.	No First Aid kit in vehicle.	C		3	3
12.	Failure to return vehicle licence plate at request of authorised officer following expiry, revocation or suspension of licence.	*		2	2
13.	Interfering with a taximeter	*	4	4	4
14.	Failure to display vehicle licence plate in authorised manner	C		3	3

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
15.	Proprietor of HC or PH Operator failing to report accident damage to vehicle within 72 hours.	*		2	2
16.	Failure to produce insurance documents at request of authorised officer.	*		4	4
17.	Using unlicensed vehicle, or using without insurance.	*C		12	12
18.	Carrying more passengers than permitted by vehicle licence.	*B	4		
19.	Refusal to carry passengers without reasonable excuse. (HC)	*	4		
20.	Unauthorised advertising on vehicle.	C		3	3
21.	Failure to notify transfer of vehicle licence interest within 14 days.	*		3	3
22.	Failure to convey or assist with carrying luggage.	B/C	2		
23.	Failure to deliver lost property to police	B/C	2		
24.	Failure to display tariff card in the vehicle (HC)	B/C		3	
25.	Defective taxi meter (HC)	B		3	

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
26.	Vehicle not clean, well maintained or comfortable	C		3	2
27.	Failure of HC Proprietor to hold a HC drivers' licence	*		2	
28.	Unattended HC Vehicle on a rank. (HC)	*	2		
29.	Failure to present vehicle for mechanical inspection.	*		3	3
30.	HC or PHV unfit for use as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle	*		4	4
31.	Use of vehicle without a current compliance certificate	*		9	9
32.	Plying for hire without a licence	*	9	9	
33.	Overcharging (HC)	*	4		
34.	HC Proprietor employing an unlicensed driver (HC)	*		12	
35.	Using a vehicle subject to a suspension order issued by an authorised Officer, or by the police.	*		12	12
36.	Driver not holding a HC and/or PH drivers licence.	*	6		

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
37.	Unnecessarily prolonging a journey	*	4		
38.	PH Driver failing to notify the Council of serious injury or illness	C	4		

4.3 Operator Breaches

PH - Private Hire

		Contravention	Driver	Proprietor	Operator
39.	Failure to keep proper records of bookings	*			4
40.	Operating a PH Vehicle when the driver is not licensed	*			12
41.	Operating a vehicle as a PH Vehicle when the vehicle is not licensed as a PH Vehicle	*			12

Appendix L - Dress Code

1.1 Ashford Borough Council is committed to encouraging the professional image of the trade and it considers that drivers should conform to a minimum standard of dress, as set out below, in order to:

- Raise and maintain the profile of the licensed trade
- Promote confidence amongst members of public to ensure passengers feel comfortable when using licensed vehicles
- Promote public safety by ensuring the safe operation of licensed vehicles at all times and that licensing drivers are readily identifiable

1.2 Acceptable Standards of Dress:

- Shirts, blouses, T-shirts, or sweat tops should cover the shoulders and be of sufficient length to enable them to be tucked into trousers or shorts
- Shirts or blouses can be worn with a tie or open-necked
- Trousers may be either full length or shorts if tailored
- Smart jeans type trousers are permitted
- Footwear should fit around the heel of feet

1.3 Unacceptable standards of dress within this Code:

- Bare chests
- Unclean or damaged clothing or footwear
- Clothing with offensive words, logos or graphics
- Clothing with studs or sharp edges
- Any footwear that may compromise control of a vehicle
- Hooded garments ('hoodies') worn with hood up whilst driving