

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 8

meeting date: 23 JUNE 2015
 title: REPORT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF COUNCIL'S CONDITIONS
 OF LICENCE FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES
 submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 principal author: MAIR HILL - SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee approval to consult licence holders upon proposed amendments to the standard conditions of licence for private hire vehicles and consequential amendments to the Council's Infringement Points Scheme.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives - }
- Corporate Priorities - } The Council aims to be a well-managed authority
these proposals support that objective.
- Other Considerations - }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council's standard conditions of licence for private hire vehicles currently provide at Condition 20(d) that:

"20. A private hire vehicle must:

.....

(d) display door signs stating "Advanced bookings only" and "Not insured unless prebooked". This sign shall only include the name of the Operator and its telephone number. If the words "Taxi", "Taxi Cab" or "Cab" or "for hire" form part of the Operator's name these must be omitted from the sign. These signs must be displayed on private hire vehicles AT ALL TIMES (including when the vehicle is not in use)".

2.2 The purpose of the sign is to alert the public that the vehicle is licenced as a private hire vehicle rather than Hackney Carriage vehicle and therefore cannot ply for hire and may only be booked through a licensed private hire operator. The implications for the public of not doing so would be that they may be being transported in an uninsured vehicle.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The Council's Taxi Enforcement Officer has raised concerns: that whilst this condition is being complied with in general, because there is no requirement as to the dimensions of the lettering, it is often too small to be read clearly by the public; there is no requirement for the words private hire to be included within the sign; and

that the inclusion of the operator's details in this sign overwhelms the rest of the content.

3.2 As set out above the purpose of the condition is to warn and protect the public, but this is ineffective if the signage is not clear. It is therefore proposed to amend condition 20 so that it provides for both signage on the rear doors of the vehicle identifying it clearly as a private hire vehicle and on the front doors of the vehicle stating only the operators name and telephone number. It is proposed that Condition 20 as a whole should read as follows:

"20. A private hire vehicle must:

(a) not have any lights, plates, signs, advertisements or other fittings, save for those required under conditions or as approved by the Council;

(b) not be equipped with any roof fitting or sign other than a wireless aerial, approved by the Council;

(c) not display the words "Taxi", "Taxi Cab" or "Cab";

(d) display door signs upon its rear doors stating "Private Hire Vehicle", "Advanced bookings only" and "Not insured unless prebooked" only and the lettering within those signs must be in bold black type and not less than 15mm in height . These signs must be displayed on private hire vehicles AT ALL TIMES (including when the vehicle is not in use)";

(e) display door signs upon its front doors which shall only include the name of the private hire operator and its telephone number. If the words "Taxi", "Taxi Cab" or "Cab" or "for hire" form part of the Operator's name these must be omitted from the sign; and

(f) display a sign stating "no smoking" with a minimum diameter of 70mm inside the vehicle in a position which is clearly visible to the hirer/passengers."

3.3 As a consequence of this amendment it would also be necessary to amend the Council's Infringement Points Scheme to reflect the amendment, so that it would read:

20(a)-(f)	Failure to comply with the Council's requirements as to signage.	5
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3.3 Before any amendment to licence conditions is made all licence holders must be consulted and so Committee is asked to authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consult licence holders upon the amendments proposed above.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The conditions would require amendment.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - No implications identified.
- Political - No implications identified.
- Reputation – No implications identified.

- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consult upon the proposed amendment to condition 20 of the Council's standard condition of private hire vehicle licence and to the Council's Infringement Points Scheme.

MAIR HILL
SOLICITOR

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Ribble Valley Borough Council Private Hire Vehicle Licence Standard Conditions –

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8672/private_hire_vehicle_licence_conditions

- Ribble Valley Borough Council Infringement Points Scheme

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8670/infringement_points_scheme

For further information please ask for Mair Hill, extension 3216.

REF: MJH/LICENSING/23 June 2015