

Building a better community for all

Licensing Service
Hackney Carriage &
Private Hire Licensing Policy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

The main proposals contained in this draft document are summarised below:

- Bringing all policies & procedures in line with new Department of Transport Best Practice Guidance.
- Revising and extending the specification of licensed vehicles as well as introducing an age limit of 15 years on licensed vehicles by 2008 and reducing this by one year annually until an age limit of 10 year is reached by 2013
- Increasing the requirements for vehicle inspections to up to 3 per year for older vehicles
- Overhauling the requirements in respect of advertising and signage on private hire vehicles
- Introducing new controls and conditions to bring stretched limousines and similar vehicles properly under licensing control
- Introducing new formal written policies in respect of:
 - The relevance of criminal convictions
 - Disciplinary Hearings
 - Enforcement
- Introducing a formula for determining increases in fares and setting a timetable for the regular review of fare scales
- Reducing the age and qualifications for licensed drivers to 18yrs with the proviso that a full driving licence has been held for one year
- Revising and extending the conditions and requirements attached to private hire operator's licences.
- Considering the introduction of policies to help promote the use of cleaner and greener fuels
- Detailing the knowledge test for drivers
- Detailing the medical fitness standard for licensed drivers
- Revising and extending the conditions attached to private hire driver's licences
- Introducing a new Dress Code and a Code of Conduct for licensed drivers
- Confirming the requirement that taximeters should be calendar controlled.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Powers and Duties

- 1.1.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended, places on Blackpool Council as the Licensing Authority (the "Authority") the duty to carry out its licensing functions in respect of hackney carriage (taxis) and private hire vehicles.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 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), or for those with mobility difficulties.

In setting out its policy, the Authority seeks to promote the following objectives:

- (i) The protection of public health and safety;
- (ii) The establishment of a professional and respected hackney carriage and private hire trade;
- (iii) Access to an efficient and effective public transport service;
- (iv) The protection of the environment.

The aim of the licensing process, in this context, is to regulate the hackney carriage and private hire trade in order to promote the above objectives. It is the Authority's wish to facilitate well-run and responsible businesses, which display sensitivity to the wishes and needs of the general public.

- 1.2.2 When considering each of the policies detailed in this document we have endeavoured to ensure that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public. In accordance with the guidance, when considering each policy, the following question has been asked:

"Whether those costs are really commensurate with the benefits a policy is meant to achieve".

1.3 Best Practice Guidance

In formulating this policy, advice contained in the Taxi And Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance issued by the Department for Transport has been taken into account.

1.4 Status

- 1.4.1 In exercising its discretion in carrying out its regulatory functions, the Authority will have regard to this policy document and the objectives set out above.

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



1.5 Implementation

- 1.5.1 Upon implementation of this policy, the Authority expects licence-holders to comply with its terms immediately. It is acknowledged, however, that certain provisions may place financial obligations on existing licence-holders and accordingly the authority is prepared to permit a transitional period, during which, necessary changes must be made. Accordingly, the full weight of this policy shall not take effect until the end of that period.

1.6 Licensing Profile

The Authority currently licences 256 hackney carriages, 44 Landaus and approximately 450 private hire vehicles as well as 25 private hire operators. It has 699 drivers licensed to drive hackney carriages and 828 licensed for private hire.

2 VEHICLES – (Hackney Carriage & Private Hire)

2.1 Limitation of Numbers

2.1.1 No powers exist for licensing authorities to limit the number of private hire vehicles that they licence. The grant of a hackney carriage licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed taxis 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, it would, therefore, have to be established that the authority had reasonably been satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand.

2.1.2



The Authority, to determine whether there is any unmet demand employs The Halcrow Group, to undertake surveys at 3 yearly intervals. The last review took place in October 2006, which indicated no unmet demand.

It is proposed that the number of hackney carriage licences continue to be restricted to 256 together with 44 landaus.

2.2 Specifications and Conditions

2.2.1 Local authorities have a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can licence as taxis or private hire vehicles.

2.2.2 The Best Practice Guidance suggests that local licensing authorities should adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicle as possible. They are however encouraged to make use of the “type approval” rules within any specifications they determine.

2.2.3 The Authority 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 carriage 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. Appendix A sets out the minimum standards, which are proposed in respect of all licensed vehicles.

2.2.4 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 a local authority will licence as hackney carriages.

2.2.5 The Authority maintains a current list of approved vehicles, which is regularly updated.

2.3 Accessibility

2.3.1 The Authority currently licences 256 hackney carriages only **180** of which are wheelchair accessible. The government's proposals to implement the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 involve splitting implementation into 2 phases dependant upon a number of criteria. Blackpool is a phase 1 authority and may be required to introduce accessible vehicles as Hackney Carriages by 2010.

2.3.2 The Authority is committed to social inclusion and ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to disabled residents to enjoy a high quality of life. They fully support the view of the Disability Rights Commission that, "Making successful journeys is critical to the social inclusion of disabled people. Without the ability to travel, disabled people are denied access to life opportunities. Their access to education, shopping, employment healthcare as well as social and family life is significantly improved when journeys become accessible." For this reason, the Council considers it important that disabled residents have access to all forms of public



transportation. In addition to the general conditions, accessibility for disabled people (including - but not only people who need to travel in a wheelchair) is, therefore, an important consideration in respect of vehicles licensed as hackney carriages.

2.3.3 It is arguable that different accessibility considerations should apply between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in that hackney carriages can be hired in the street or at a rank, by the customer dealing directly with a driver, however, 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 taxi on the spot with the minimum delay or inconvenience and having accessible taxis available helps makes that possible.

2.4 Maximum Age of Vehicles

2.4.2 Local licensing authorities are, however, also advised to consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental initiatives by, perhaps, setting vehicle emissions standards or promoting cleaner fuels.

2.4.3 Consideration needs to be given as to whether, in the interests of the environment, tougher emissions standards should be introduced for all licensed vehicles and, in particular, whether it would be appropriate to shorten the period of time from when new standards are introduced to when full fleet compliance with those standards is achieved. Any introduction of emissions standards would, however, need to be phased, to ensure that operating profits were maintained. This would mean, not only following the

adoption dates for Euro standards, but also introducing strict retirement dates for vehicles that fail to meet the latest standards. It is proposed that the pit test be extended to include testing the vehicle's emissions.

- 2.4.4 Vehicles manufactured prior to 1994 did not have to meet emission limits (Euro1 Technology) designed to improve air quality. It is, therefore proposed, that, in the interests of improving air quality, any application for the grant or renewal of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence, where the vehicle in question is more than 10 years old, shall not be granted. This provision will not apply to non-motorised vehicles. An exceptional quality policy will be developed to exempt from the age policy certain vehicles over 10 years.

The Authority will continue to work to achieve an improvement in air quality by improving licensed vehicle emissions testing.

Commencing in April 2008 no vehicle over the age of 15 years will be licensed or re - licensed unless the owner takes up the Exceptional Condition exemption. It is intended to reduce this age limit by one year annually until a maximum age of 10 years is reached by 2013.

2.5 Vehicle Testing

- 2.5.2 Vehicle testing arrangements are currently exclusively through the Authority's OSD vehicle inspection facility. This appears to be working very well. It is, accordingly, not proposed, at this stage, to make any changes to these vehicle-testing arrangements.

2.6 Signage and Advertising

- 2.6.1 Within the Blackpool area, hackney vehicles are required to display plates on both the front and rear of the vehicle. This is a key feature in helping to identify vehicles that are properly licensed. All hackney vehicles, except for minibuses, transits, people carrier type vehicles and those with built-in roof signs, should carry illuminated roof-mounted signs indicating that they are a taxi. Similarly and in order to differentiate between the two types of licensed vehicle, private hire vehicles will not be able to carry roof-mounted signs of any kind or any references to the words "Taxi" or "Hackney". Minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles which do not have roof signs, will have to display the single word "Taxi" on the front and rear of the vehicle.
- 2.6.2 Private hire vehicles in the Borough are required to display windscreen discs (supplied by the Authority) and door signage which indicates that they are for private hire only and are not insured for other uses. For some years it has been the policy not to permit magnetic door signage. There are no plans to change this policy.
- 2.6.3 It is essential that members of the public should be able to easily identify the difference between a hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle. Private hire vehicles will display signs indicating that they must be pre-booked.
- 2.6.4 Every licensed hackney and private hire vehicle must display a "How Am I Driving?" plate clearly visible to the rear of the vehicle. The plate will

display the telephone number 0800 0730628. This number is linked to the Authority's Public Protection Section who will record and investigate any complaints made. Details of the scheme will be publicised in Hotels & Guest Houses to encourage reports of overcharging, incivility or other poor service provision.

"How Am I Driving?" plates will be provided by the Authority's Licensing Service at a modest cost to cover materials and staff time.

- 2.6.5 Some advertising, generally limited to the proprietor's company name, logo and telephone number along with details of fare scales or discounts charged by the owner/proprietor will be allowed on vehicles but that the size and position of such information be strictly controlled with such advertising being kept to a minimum on private hire vehicles with more latitude being allowed for hackneys.

2.7 Taxi Sharing Scheme

- 2.7.1 This Scheme, detailed fully in Appendix L, permits shared use of a hackney carriage at a set fare per passenger along designated popular routes provided the consent of each sharing passenger is obtained prior to the commencement of the journey.

2.8 Security/CCTV

- 2.8.1 The hackney and private hire trade provide a valuable public service especially late at night when other forms of public transport are no longer available. Security for drivers and passengers is of paramount importance. CCTV can be a valuable deterrent as well as protecting the driver from unjustified complaints.



- 2.8.2 It is not proposed that such measures such as CCTV should be required, as part of the licensing regime, as it is considered that they are best left to the judgement of the owners and drivers themselves. The hackney carriage and private hire trades are, however, encouraged to consider the installation of CCTV in their vehicles on a voluntary basis. The Authority will explore every avenue of Government funding to assist the trade in offsetting the cost of C.C.T.V.

2.9 Application Procedures

- 2.9.1 The application procedures for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence are not prescribed. It is, however, proposed that existing practice should largely be retained in that applications must be made on the specified application form in accordance with the application procedure set out in Appendix C


2.10 Consideration of Applications

- 2.10.1 The Authority 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.

2.11 Grant and Renewal of Licences

- 2.11.1 Hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licences will continue to be granted for a one-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.
- 2.11.2 Holders of existing hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence will be reminded, in the month preceding their expiry, when their licences are due to be renewed. Application forms, appropriate fees, and supporting documentation, as set out in Appendix C, must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the expiry of the previous licence.
- 2.11.3 To assist owners who wish to be able to change vehicles half way through the licence period, they will be able to transfer the un-expired portion of the annual licence from one vehicle to another, however, the new vehicle must continue to be tested in accordance with the current procedure.

2.12 Environmental Considerations

- 2.12.1  Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are an essential form of transport in the Blackpool area. Many people depend on taxis for trips that buses or cars are incapable of making. They are able to achieve higher occupancy rates than a private car and so, to some extent, already play their part in helping to achieve environmental improvements in the borough. It is, however, clearly important that emissions from taxis are reduced as far as possible.
- 2.12.2 Appendix A makes it clear that LPG conversions to vehicles are perfectly acceptable. The policy proposed at 2.4.3 above will, furthermore, assist in this respect by ensuring that older and therefore less efficient vehicles will no longer be licensed.
- 2.12.3 Clearly emissions from hackney carriages and private hire vehicles could be reduced further, by encouraging better maintenance of vehicles and by switching off engines when stationary or idling, particularly at taxi ranks. It is, however, proposed that this aspect be tackled through education and promotion.

2.13 Stretched Limousines

2.13.1



Stretched limousines are elongated saloon cars that have been increasingly used for mainstream private hire work. The number of stretched limousines being imported, particularly from the United States, has been increasing. Their use generally includes all private hire work plus special occasions such as days at the races, stag and hen parties and children's birthday parties.

2.13.2 Licensing authorities have generally considered there to be some problems preventing stretched limousines from being licensed including:

- some of the vehicles are capable of carrying more than eight passengers;
- many of them are left hand drive;
- many are fitted with all round darkened glass;
- most originate from the United States;
- many have been converted or modified after manufacture;
- seating space per passenger is 460mm and could give a greater capacity than eight persons;
- due to their origin many parts may not be available making adequate maintenance difficult.

2.13.3 Most limousines are imported for commercial purposes and are therefore required to take a Single Vehicle Type Approval (SVA) test. They cannot be approved as Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV) because they cannot meet the required standards for the door arrangements and means of escape in an emergency. The SVA Scheme is an Inspection Scheme for vehicles that are not approved to British and European Standards and its purpose is to ensure that these vehicles meet modern safety standards and environmental standards before being used on public roads. When presented for SVA the vehicle is produced with a declaration that it will never carry more than eight passengers. The importer must inform any person who may use it of this restriction. Any subsequent purchasers must also be informed of the restriction.

2.13.4 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 defines a private hire vehicle as a motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry fewer than eight passengers, other than the hackney carriage or public service vehicle, which is provided for hire with the services of the driver for the purposes of carrying customers. Section 48 of the 1976 Act requires that before a licence is granted the Authority must be satisfied that the vehicle is compliant with the requirements outlined in Appendix B.

2.13.5 Stretched limousines can be licensed for private hire work providing they may carry no more than eight passengers and meet the requirements of the Act. Possible exemptions under the 1976 Act provide that nothing should:

- (i) apply to a vehicle used for bringing passengers or goods within

a controlled district in pursuance of a contract for the hire of the vehicle made outside the district if the vehicle is not made available for hire within the district;

- (ii) apply to a vehicle while it is being used in connection with a funeral or a vehicle used wholly or mainly, by a person carrying on the business of a funeral director, for the purpose of funerals;
- (iii) apply to a vehicle being used in connection with a wedding.

2.13.6 Any stretched limousines, which are offered for private hire, do, of course, require a licence. Some operators of these vehicles have a wedding car licence insurance policy on the basis that the vehicle will be used largely during daylight hours, once or twice per week. Before licensing for private hire a full policy for private hire purposes will, therefore, be required.

2.13.7 In accordance with the guidance, all applications to licence stretched limousines as private hire vehicles will be treated on their merits. It is, however, proposed that imported stretched limousine type vehicles:

- be granted an exemption from the requirement under the conditions of licence for private hire vehicles to be right hand drive;
- be authorised as prestige type private hire vehicles; and
- be approved for licensing as private hire vehicles subject to the additional conditions detailed in Appendix B;

2.13.8 There are obviously concerns regarding the use of darkened glass in stretch limousines. It is, accordingly, considered that the glass in any windows surrounding the driver must be clear and the rearmost window must allow a minimum of 70% light transmission.

2.14 Contract Vehicles

2.14.1 Currently, there is no requirement for a vehicle to be licensed where it is used for a contract with an organisation/firm for a period more than seven days for carrying passengers for hire or reward under a contract for the hire of the vehicle. This exemption only applies to the vehicle and driver subject to the contract and then only during the period of the contract. Any vehicle being used for a contract with one firm cannot be used for any other contract or purpose during the period of that contract.

The Road Safety Act 2006 when in force in January, 2008, will require vehicles currently taking advantage of this exemption to become licensed private hire vehicles.

2.15 Funeral Vehicles

2.15.1 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.

2.16 Wedding Vehicles

- 2.16.1 A vehicle does not need to be licensed while it is being used in connection with a wedding.
- 2.16.2 Written certification from the Authority of the relevant exemption claimed is not currently required and it is not proposed to change this arrangement.



3 DRIVERS

3.1 Parallel Procedures

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

3.2 Licences

- 3.2.1 This Authority has always required that separate driver's licences be held in respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

The Authority currently offers drivers of either discipline the other type of drivers badge at the cost of materials only.

3.3 Age and Experience

- 3.3.1 A licence to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle will not be granted to a person who is under 18 years of age, no upper age limit is proposed. In addition, a licence will not be granted to anyone over 18 who have not held a full driving licence for a period of one year.

3.4 Topographical Knowledge (Driver Knowledge Tests)

- 3.4.1 Hackney carriage drivers clearly need a good working knowledge of the area for which they are licensed, because hackney carriages can be hired immediately, directly with the driver, at ranks or on the street. The Authority also considers it necessary for private hire drivers to know the area.
- 3.4.2 In order to determine fitness to hold a licence, applicants are required to undertake a written test as to their knowledge of the local geography. The existing test will be expanded to test the driver's knowledge of customer care and the byelaws.

The procedures in relation to the above are set out in Appendix C.

3.5 Driving Proficiency and Qualifications

- 3.5.1 The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) provides a driving assessment specifically designed for taxi drivers. Some authorities require the above-mentioned DSA test or some further driving test to be taken.
- 3.5.2 The Authority believes that the standard car-driving test provides sufficient evidence of driving competency for the drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in this area. It is considered that introducing a requirement that drivers pass the specific DSA test or indeed any other competency qualification would not produce benefits, which are commensurate with the costs involved.

3.6 Medical Examination

3.6.1 A request for a medical examination, which may be presented to the applicant's GP, is obtainable from the Authority's Licensing Office. The applicant will be responsible for paying the fee for the examination to the relevant surgery. On completion of the examination, a confidential report will be submitted to the Authority. The applicant may, on request, have a copy of the report.



- 3.6.2 Existing licence holders of 65 and over must be examined annually. Drivers aged less than 65 yrs of age must undergo a medical every 3 years.
- 3.6.3 Holders of current PSV and/or HGV Licences, where the holder is able to produce proof of current medical examination, will not be required to undergo a further medical examination.
- 3.6.4 Licence holders must advise the Authority of any deterioration in their health that may affect their driving capabilities.
- 3.6.5 Where there is any doubt as to the medical fitness of the Applicant, the Authority may require the Applicant to undergo and pay for a further medical examination by a Doctor appointed by the Authority.
- 3.6.6 Where there remains any doubt about the fitness of any applicant, the Public Protection Sub Committee will review the medical evidence and make any final decision in light of the medical evidence available.
- 3.6.7 On renewal no licence will be issued until medical clearance (if required) has been established.

3.7 Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosures

- 3.7.1 A criminal record check on a driver is seen as an important safety measure. Enhanced Disclosure through the Criminal Records Bureau is required as these disclosures include details of spent convictions and police cautions.
- 3.7.2 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to applicants for both hackney and private hire driving licences. They are required to disclose all convictions, including those that would normally be regarded as spent.
- 3.7.3 Before an application for a driver's licence will be considered, the applicant must provide a current (less than 3 months old) Enhanced CRB Disclosure of criminal convictions or a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy in the case of an overseas applicant.
- 3.7.4 The Authority is an approved Criminal Records Bureau body; therefore, applicants can deal with the Criminal Records Bureau through the Authority and will be charged an appropriate fee.

- 3.7.5 If a driver can satisfy the Authority that they have been conviction or warning free for a minimum period of five years, CRB checks will be required once in every three-year period. A conviction or warning imposed after the licence has been issued/renewed MAY result in a return to annual CRB checks for appropriate offences. Licensed drivers are obliged to notify the Authority without delay of any criminal convictions. Where criminal records are not being checked every 12 months, it is clearly more important that this requirement is strictly adhered to and accordingly any breaches of this requirement will immediately become the subject of a disciplinary hearing where a firm line will be taken with the licence holder.
- 3.7.6 It is proposed that some additional controls be introduced. These include the licence holder be required to formally confirm (by signing a declaration) both their licence details and the fact that they have not been convicted of any offence.
- 3.7.7 The Authority is bound by rules of confidentiality, and will not divulge information obtained to any third parties. The Applicant for a CRB disclosure will be sent a separate disclosure report to their home address, while the Authority will also receive a copy of the report.

3.8 Relevance of Convictions and Cautions

- 3.8.1 In relation to the consideration of convictions and cautions recorded against persons the Authority is proposing to adopt the policy set out in Appendix D under Relevance of Convictions.
- 3.8.2 In assessing whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence, the Authority will consider each case on its merit. They will take account of cautions and convictions, whether spent or unspent, but only in so far as they are relevant to an application for a licence. Upon receipt of a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau, the Senior Licensing Officer will assess whether any or all of the convictions are capable of having real relevance to the issue of whether or not the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.
- 3.8.3 In relation to cautions, the Authority will have regard to the class and age of the offence and the age of the applicant when the offence occurred, when considering their relevance to an application..
- 3.8.4 In relation to previous convictions, the Authority will have regard to the following:
- (i) Whether the convictions are spent or unspent;
 - (ii) The class of the offences;
 - (iii) The age of the offences;
 - (iv) The apparent seriousness, as gauged by the penalty.
- 3.8.5 In particular, applications will be referred to the Public Protection Sub Committee where the applicant's record includes one or more of the following:
- Any term of imprisonment or custody;
 - Any conviction for a violent or sexual offence, or dishonesty, which is of a serious nature;

- Any serious motoring offence, such as dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, or drink driving;
- Any drug related offence.

3.9 Application Procedure

- 3.9.1 An application for a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence must be made on the specified application form. The application procedure is set out in Appendix C.

3.10 Grant and Renewal of Licences

- 3.10.1 Holders of existing hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence will be reminded, in the month preceding their expiry, when their licences are due to be renewed. Application forms, appropriate fees, and supporting documentation, as set out in Appendix C, must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the expiry of the previous licence.
- 3.10.2 Applicants for renewal of a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence are required to provide a current (less than 3 months old) enhanced criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau every third year. Applicants who are aged 65 or over must provide evidence of their medical fitness to hold a licence upon renewal each year.
- 3.10.3 No licences will be issued or renewed unless medical clearance has been established.

3.11 Conditions of Licence

- 3.11.1 The Authority 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.
- 3.11.2 It could be argued that many of the requirements prescribed within the Hackney byelaws are effectively hackney carriage driver's licence conditions. Blackpool byelaws were, however, enacted over 30 years ago and do not, therefore, impose any controls over many aspects of a driver's conduct when operating a hackney vehicle. Amending byelaws is, nevertheless a complex and lengthy process with inherent restrictions. It is, accordingly, not proposed to seek such amendments as part of this review process.
- 3.11.3 It is considered that the conditions set out in Appendix E are reasonably necessary and appropriate for all licensed drivers but accepted that they may only be legally imposed in respect of private hire drivers.

3.12 Convictions during period of licence

3.12.1 Where offences, leading to conviction, are committed by licensed drivers, it is important, in the interests of consistency and transparency, that a procedure should be in place to consider what effect this should have on their hackney or private hire driver's licence.



3.12.2 Drivers, who are convicted of any criminal or motoring offence during the currency of their hackney or private hire driver's licence, must disclose the conviction and the penalty involved to the Authority within seven days. For these purposes, a fixed penalty motoring offence amounts to a conviction.

3.12.3 It is proposed that breaches of the relevant legislation or conditions attached to driver, operator and vehicle licences, which may come to light following complaints, enforcement action or investigations should be dealt with following the general principals set out in Appendix J .

3.13 Code of Good Conduct

3.13.1 Adopting a Code of Good Conduct for hackney carriage and private hire drivers serves to promote the Authority's licensing objectives in respect of the hackney carriage and private hire trades.

3.13.2 The standards expected of licensed drivers are set out in the Code of Good conduct, included in this policy document at Appendix F, and should be read in conjunction with the other statutory and policy requirements set out in this document. Licence holders will be required to sign to say that they have read and understood the code.

3.14 Driver's Dress Code

3.14.1 Anything that serves to enhance the professional image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, and promotes the concept that drivers of licensed vehicles are vocational drivers is to be welcomed. The code is to be found at appendix G.

4 DISCIPLINARY AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

4.1 Enforcement

- 4.1.1 It is recognised that well-directed enforcement activity by the Authority benefits not only the public but also the responsible members of the hackney carriage and private hire trades.
- 4.1.2 In pursuance of its objective to encourage responsible hackney carriage/private hire businesses, the Authority will operate a firm but fair disciplinary and enforcement regime. With a view to balancing the promotion of public safety with the need to permit individuals to safeguard their livelihood without undue interference, the Authority will only intervene where it is necessary and proportionate to do so, having regard to the objectives outlined in section 1.2.1 of this document. Where defects are such that vehicles need to be immediately prohibited livelihood interference is inevitable.
- 4.1.3 The Taxi Licensing and Enforcement Policy & Practice set out at Appendix I will ensure that the Authority's enforcement effort is reasonable, transparent and well directed.

4.2 Disciplinary Hearings

- 4.2.1 Disciplinary matters may be referred to the Authority's Public Protection Sub Committee. One of the functions of this 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. The proposed procedure in respect of Disciplinary Hearings is set out in Appendix J.



4.3 Range of Powers

4.3.1 Issuing of Warnings and Cautions

As a method of dealing with less serious matters, the Authority will issue warnings and cautions as are appropriate to the circumstances. Minor or first-time transgressions are likely to attract either an oral or written warning. Repeated or more serious conduct is likely to lead to the issuing of a formal caution, provided:

- there is sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution;
- the licence holder admits his/her guilt;
- the licence holder agrees to be cautioned.

4.3.2 **Suspension**

(i) Vehicles

Hackney carriage vehicles and private hire vehicles must be kept at all times in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition. Compliance with the vehicle specifications and conditions is essential and will be enforced by periodic, random vehicle inspections by the Authority. Where it is found that any vehicle is not being properly maintained, a defect(s) notice will be served on the proprietor setting out the defect(s) and where public safety is likely to be imperilled, the further use of the vehicle will be suspended (stop notice) until the defects have been remedied. The suspension will then not be lifted until the vehicle has undergone a further test, at the proprietor's expense and been passed as fit for use as a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

(ii) Drivers

The Authority may exercise its discretion to suspend the operation of a driver's licence for a specified period. Such action will, however, only be taken after a hearing before the Public Protection Sub-Committee.

4.3.3 **Revocation**

Where a licence holder has been referred to the Public Protection Sub-Committee, the Committee may order the revocation or suspension of the licence.

4.3.4 **Refusal to Renew**

As an alternative to revocation, the Committee may decide that the appropriate action, in a situation where the licence is shortly to expire, is to order that the licence shall not be renewed.

4.3.5 **Prosecution**

The Authority will usually prosecute licence holders for relevant offences in accordance with the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy statement relating to Warnings and Cautions.

5 OFFENCES are dealt with in Appendix D

6 DELEGATED POWERS

6.1 Public Protection Sub-Committee

- 6.1.1 The Public Protection Sub-Committee of the Authority is responsible for the management of the hackney carriage and Private Hire licensing regime in the district, along with the formulation and review of its policy in this regard.

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 Authority 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 licence 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 private hire 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 Authority will then decide whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold an operator's licence.

7.2 Criminal Record Checks

- 7.2.1 Private hire operators are not exceptions in respect of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, so Standard or Enhanced disclosures cannot be required as a condition of grant of an operator's licence. A Basic Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau or a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy for



overseas applicants are, nevertheless, seen as appropriate. A reference, covering for example the applicant's financial record, as well as or instead of the checks outlined above is also seen as useful.

- 7.2.2 Before an application for a private hire operator's licence will be considered, the applicant must provide a current (less than 3 months old) Basic CRB

Disclosure of criminal convictions or a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy in the case of an overseas applicant.

7.3 Conditions

- 7.3.1 The Authority has power to impose such conditions on an operator's licence, as it considers reasonably necessary.
- 7.3.2 The model conditions set out in Appendix H are considered to be reasonably necessary.

7.4 Insurance

- 7.4.1 It is considered appropriate for an Authority to check that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public.
- 7.4.2 Before an application for a private hire operator's licence is granted, the applicant must produce evidence that they have taken out appropriate public liability insurance for the premises to be licensed.
- 7.4.3 The private hire operator's licence conditions, set out in Appendix H require that the operator produce an appropriate certificate of motor insurance, which covers every private hire vehicle, they operate as well as appropriate public liability insurance for their premises.

7.5 Licence Duration

- 7.5.1 The Department for Transport considers that annual licence renewal is not necessary or appropriate for private hire operators. They recommend, as good practice, that a licence period of five years would be reasonable.
- 7.5.2 It is considered that 5 years is a long time in the context of the life of a business of this type. It is, therefore, proposed that a successful applicant will be granted a private hire operators licence, for a three-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
- 7.5.3 Holders of existing private hire operators licences will be reminded, in the month preceding their expiry, when their licences are due to be renewed.

7.6 Address from which an Operator may operate

- 7.6.1 Upon grant of an operator's licence, the Authority will specify the address from which the operator may operate. The operator must notify the Authority in writing of any change of his/her address, (whether this is a home address or the address from he/she operates) during the period of the licence, within 7 days of such change, taking place.

7.7 Bases outside the Blackpool Council Area

- 7.7.1 The Authority will not grant an operator's licence for an operator with an operating base that is outside the Authority's area. This is to ensure that proper regulation and enforcement measures may be taken by the Authority and is in no way intended to be a restraint of trade.

8 FARES

8.1 General

8.1.1



Taxi fares, set by a Local Authority, are a maximum, and can be negotiated downwards by the hirer. Licensing authorities have the power to set taxi fares for journeys within their area the Authority considers it good practice to review the fare scales at regular intervals, and will consider the fare scales on an annual basis. When determining the level of fares consideration will be given to what it is reasonable to expect the travelling public to pay as well as the need to give the drivers an incentive to provide a service at the times it is needed.

8.1.2

These regulations do not apply to private hire vehicles.

8.1.3

Out of Borough journeys can be negotiated prior to the commencement of the journey in both private hire vehicles and hackney carriages.

8.2 Table of Fares

8.2.1

A table of authorised maximum fares will be provided to each hackney carriage licence holder, which must then be displayed in each vehicle so that it is easily visible to all hirers.

8.3 Review

8.3.1

Fares rates are currently, normally only reviewed by the Authority following representations from the trade or from a particular sector of the trade.

8.4 Receipts

8.4.1

A hackney carriage driver must, if requested by the passenger, provide him/her with a written receipt for the fare paid.

9 FEES

9.1 Fee Structure

9.1.1

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.

9.2 Payments

9.2.1

Fees for licences, or vehicle inspections must be made payable to the Authority.

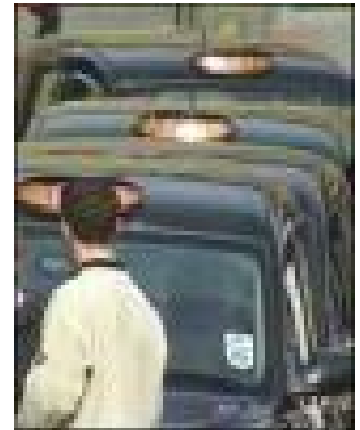
9.3 Payment Refunds and Transfers

- 9.3.1 The appropriate fee must be paid when the application is submitted and that a charge will be levied to cover the administrative costs associated with the transfer of a vehicle. In the case of vehicle licences, where licence holder's surrender their licence prior to their expiry date. The Authority does not make any refunds in respect of the unexpired portions of the licence fees.

10 TAXI RANKS

10.1 Appointed Ranks

- 10.1.1 Blackpool Taxi Ranks are undergoing an agreed revision with the hackney and private hire trade and a revised booklet including the ranks and byelaws will be published separately upon completion.



10.2 Waiting on Stands

- 10.2.1 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.

11 TRAINING

- 11.1 The Taxi Quality Scrutiny report identified customer service as an area requiring significant improvement. By undertaking customer service training, drivers could acquire positive skills enabling them to present a more professional image to residents and tourists alike.

Funding amounting to £160,000 has been found to subsidise a B-tech qualification due to commence in November 2007.

Existing drivers will be encouraged to participate in customer care training especially BTEC award on transporting passengers by taxi and private hire.

This qualification will become a requirement for drivers holding contracts issued by the Authority to undertake transport services with effect from 2009.

- 11.2 It is proposed that all new applicants must, before being granted a drivers licence, undertake a BTEC award as approved by the Authority.

APPENDIX A

VEHICLES - SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

1 GENERAL

1.1 All licensed vehicles shall comply in all respects with the requirements set out below as appropriate for the type of vehicle (hackney or private hire). This is in addition to all requirements of the road traffic legislation, which relates to all motor vehicles. All hackney carriage vehicles will also be subject to the requirements of the byelaws made in respect of hackney carriages in so far as they relate to vehicles.

1.2 All vehicles shall have an appropriate "type approval" which is either a :-

- i) European Whole Vehicle Type approval;
- ii) British National Type approval; or
- iii) British Single Vehicle Approval.

It is also recommended that vehicles with Euro NCAP star ratings of 4 or more should be considered when purchasing a new vehicle.

1.3 All vehicles shall be capable of carrying not less than 4 passengers, be fitted with a right hand drive (special conditions apply to stretched limousines) and shall have an engine size not less than 1298cc.

Applications for specialist or novelty vehicles will be considered on merit.

1.4 All vehicles shall comply with all construction and use/ type approval requirements applicable to it. The maximum permitted length is 18 ft. The maximum permitted weight is 3500 kg

1.5 All vehicles shall be either a purpose built taxi, or a 4-door saloon or 5-door estate/ multi-passenger vehicle, except that a private hire vehicle shall not be of the London Taxi type.

1.6 **(1) All vehicles shall be less than FIFTEEN years old** from the date of manufacture. This upper age will reduce by 1 year annually to 2013 by which time it will be TEN YEARS

(2) Vehicles over the age of 15 years (10 YEARS OF AGE BY 2013) may apply for "Exceptional Quality " Status, which allows them to be licensed until such time as a mechanical defect is found when the vehicle must be removed from service. **No retests are permitted under this arrangement.**

1.7 Vehicles should have no damage affecting the structural safety of the vehicle and must not have been written off for insurance purposes at any time.

1.8 Sufficient means shall be provided by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver.

1.9 All vehicles shall at all times be maintained in sound and roadworthy condition and serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

2 DOORS

- 2.1 All saloons, estates or purpose built taxi vehicles shall have at least 4 side-opening doors, which may be opened from the inside and the outside. Minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles shall have at least 3 doors not including any tailgate or rear doors. There must be a minimum of 54 inches width between door handles.
- 2.2 All vehicles shall be constructed so that the doors open sufficiently wide as to allow easy access into and egress from the vehicle.
- 2.3 All vehicles, including larger passenger vehicles (multi-purpose vehicles), must have sufficient safe and suitable access and egress from the vehicle for the driver and all passengers, excluding the rear exit and the driver's front door.

3 INTERIOR DIMENSIONS

- 3.1 Height Inside: there must be sufficient space between the seat cushions and the lowest part of the roof to safely accommodate the driver and passengers in reasonable comfort. 34 inches minimum is recommended.
- 3.2 Knee Space: there must be sufficient space between the front and back seats to safely accommodate the driver and passengers in reasonable comfort. There must be at least 7 inches between the back of the front seat and the front of the next row of rearward seats.

4 SEATS

- 4.1 Access to every passenger seat must be unobstructed and be easily accessible to passengers and without the need for more than one passenger to move. Mini buses and MPVs that are unable to comply with this requirement may still be approved at the discretion of the Authority.
- 4.2 Passenger seats must be at least 16 inches, or the metric equivalent, wide per passenger with no significant intrusion by wheel arches, armrests or other parts of the vehicle. There must be a minimum of 34 inches headroom for all passenger seats measured from the rear of the seat cushion to the roof lining. There must be a minimum of 180mm legroom for all passenger seats measured from the front edge of the seat to the rear of any seat, dashboard or internal panel in front.
- 4.3 In relation to the carriage of child passengers under 3 years of age in the front seat, an appropriate child restraint **MUST** be worn. Where a child passenger is between 3-11 years old an adult seat belt must be worn if an appropriate child restraint is not available.

5 SEAT BELTS

- 5.1 All vehicles must be fitted with fully operational rear seat belts, one for each passenger to be carried, fully compliant with British Standards except where the law specifically provides an exemption.

6 PASSENGER CAPACITY

- 6.1 The carrying capacity of all vehicles shall be at the discretion of the Authority having regard to manufacturer's specifications and compliance with dimensions referred to previously.

7 FIRST AID KIT

- 7.1 There shall be provided in such a position as to be readily available at all time when the vehicle is used for hire, a suitable First Aid Kit, bearing the registered number of the vehicle, containing appropriate dressings and appliances for immediate use in an emergency. As a minimum this kit must contain the following
- (i) 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
 - (ii) 2 sterile eye pads
 - (iii) 2 individually wrapped sterile triangular bandages
 - (iv) 4 safety pins
 - (v) 6 medium sized (approximately 12cm x 12cm) individually wrapped sterile wound dressings
 - (vi) 2 large (approximately 18cm x 18cm) individually wrapped sterile wound dressings
 - (vii) 1 pair of disposable gloves

This kit places no obligation on the driver to render first aid and is primarily for the driver's own benefit.

8 VENTILATION

- 8.1 Windows must be provided at the rear and sides along with means of opening and closing not less than one window on either side.
- 8.2 Rear passenger windows must be capable of being opened by passengers when seated, unless air conditioning is available.

9 LUGGAGE

- 9.1 Adequate storage for passenger luggage separated from the passenger compartment without obstructing any emergency exits must be available. Luggage carried must be suitably secured in place.

Estate cars must be fitted with a grille to prevent luggage entering the passenger area via the top of the rear passenger seats.

10 MAINTENANCE AND CONDITION OF THE VEHICLE

- 10.1 The interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be maintained in a clean, safe and proper manner to the reasonable satisfaction of the Authority and without prejudice to the foregoing in particular the exterior of the vehicle shall be free of large dents, rust or unrepaired accident damage and shall at all times have uniform paintwork equivalent to that applied by the manufacturer. The interior shall be free of all stains, splits, and tears to the same and the seats shall be required to function in accordance with the original manufacturer's specification.
- 10.2 Vehicles shall be liable to be inspected and tested at any time. If upon inspection it is discovered that a vehicle is not being properly maintained, or kept in good order, a notice may be served on the owner to this effect, setting out the defects to be remedied. If public safety is compromised by the defects, the further use of the vehicle may be prohibited until the defects have been addressed and the vehicle has successfully undergone a further inspection.

11 MODIFICATIONS

- 11.1 No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle may be made without first complying with road traffic and insurance legislation and secondly the approval of the Licensing Office, at any time while the licence is in force. It is unlikely that anything, not of the manufacturers specification, will be authorised.

12 LICENCE PLATES AND STICKERS

- 12.1 Except as provided at 12.4 below, at all times while the vehicle is being used as a hackney or private hire vehicle there shall be securely fixed to the front and rear of the vehicle the appropriate vehicle licence plates supplied by the Authority.
- 12.2 The number of persons licensed to be carried in the vehicle shall be exhibited outside the vehicle on the vehicle licence plates referred to above. (For these purposes children (of any age) are counted as one person).
- 12.3 At all times while the vehicle is being used as either a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle there shall be displayed on the windscreen of such vehicle (top left-hand corner of the windscreen) the licence disc, which identifies the vehicle as either a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle. On this will be displayed the registration number of the vehicle and the number of passengers permitted to be carried.
- 12.4 Every licensed hackney and private hire vehicle must display a "How Am I Driving?" plate clearly visible to the rear of the vehicle. The plate will display the telephone number 0800 0730628. This number is linked to the Authority's Public Protection Section who will record and investigate any complaints made. Details of the scheme will be publicised in Hotels & Guest Houses to encourage reports of overcharging, incivility or other poor service provision.
- "How Am I Driving?" plates will be provided by the Authority's Licensing Service at a modest cost to cover materials and staff time.
- 12.5 Provided that they have received express written consent from the Authority, limousines and other professionally chauffeured vehicles may, in certain circumstances, not be required to display the external vehicle licence plates but must comply with the requirements of 12.1 above in respect of displaying the internal licence disc.

13 SIGNAGE

13 Hackney Vehicle Markings

- 13.1.1 Hackney carriage vehicles, other than minibuses, transits, people carrier type vehicles and those with built-in roof signs, must be fitted with an illuminated external sign on and above the roof of the vehicle showing the word "TAXI" on the side facing the front and the name of the company, or its telephone number, or "TAXI", or any combination of the three on the side facing towards the rear of the vehicle. The roof sign and lettering shall be of an appropriate size to enable it to be read clearly from a distance of 14 metres.
- 13.1.2 The roof sign must be centrally mounted on the vehicle roof and be adequately secured either directly to the roof or mounted on a single roof

bar and secured by bolts, straps, or clamps. Magnetic or suction fittings alone are not considered suitable without additional means of fixing.

- 13.1.3 On purpose built vehicles, with built-in roof signs, the roof light must be extinguished when the fare meter is in use.
- 13.1.4 Minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles which are not fitted with an appropriate roof sign, as indicated above, shall have the word "Taxi" in letters of between 25cm and 30 cm in height displayed on the front and rear of the vehicles so that they can be clearly identified as a hackney carriage vehicle.

14.1 Private Hire Vehicle markings

- 14.1.1 Self-adhesive identification signs as approved and supplied by the Authority, indicating that "No booking - No Ride. Not insured unless pre - booked " must be affixed to the to the drivers' door and front passenger door panels of the vehicle. These signs should not be tampered with in any way and must be displayed at all times whilst the vehicle has current private hire plates affixed.
- 14.1.2 A private hire vehicle must not carry any roof sign or any markings that might give the impression that it is a hackney carriage.
- 14.1.3 Any advertising or signage on the vehicle must specifically not include the words "taxi", "cab", "hackney carriage" or "hire" the use of which is not permitted.
- 14.1.4 No alternative words or spellings, such as "Kab", which would have the effect of leading the public to believe that a vehicle is a hackney carriage available for hire, may be used on the vehicle.

15 ADVERTISING ETC

- 15.1 Any advertising on the vehicle must be restricted to the name, logo or insignia, telephone number, free-phone number, fax number, E-mail address or Web site of the owner or operator of the vehicle. Advertising of other businesses or products or services is **not** permitted on private hire vehicles and no art works, slogans or other displays of any kind are permitted
- 15.2 No sign or advertisement shall obliterate or be confused with the vehicle's licence plate or the number plates of the vehicle.
- 15.3 Subject to the following provisions of this section, a sign must be affixed to the outside or inside of the vehicle indicating that smoking is prohibited in the vehicle or requesting passengers to refrain from smoking inside the vehicle.
- 15.4 Limited advertising, in line with the requirements of 15.1 and 15.2 above may be displayed on a vehicle subject to the following conditions:
 - 15.4.1 **Hackney Carriages**
 - (i) For saloons and estate cars the lettering of all advertising/graphics etc must be a maximum height of 15 cm and may be displayed on either the sides of the vehicle, front and rear wings, doors or on the bonnet or the rear of the vehicle

- (ii) For minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles, the lettering of all advertising/graphics etc must be a maximum height of 25 cm and may be displayed on either the sides of the vehicle, front and rear wings, doors or on the rear of the vehicle. In addition, the single word "Taxi", to a maximum height of 30 cm, may be placed on the front and rear of the vehicle.
- (iii) Any advertising may include details of current fare scales or discounts charged by the owner/proprietor.

15.4.2 Private Hire Vehicles

- (i) For saloons and estate cars the lettering of all advertising/graphics etc must be a maximum height of 15 cm and must be confined to either the rear doors, the rear wings or the rear of the vehicle to a size which does not exceed 50cm x 30cm on either side or on the rear of the vehicle.
- (ii) For minibuses, transits and similar people carrier type vehicles, the lettering of all advertising/graphics etc must be a maximum height of 25cm and must be confined to either the rear doors, the rear wings or the rear of the vehicle to a size which does not exceed 90cm x 30cm on either side or on the rear of the vehicle.
- (iii) No signs whatsoever, other than the identification signs approved and supplied by the Council (see 14.2.1 above) must be affixed to the drivers' door and front passenger door panels of the vehicle.

16 COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

- 16.1 All two-way radio equipment must be of a type currently approved by the Radio Communications Agency.
- 16.2 All radio equipment fitted to the vehicle must be fitted securely and safely and in accordance with guidelines for the time being published by the Radio Communications Agency.
- 16.3 Only one two-way radio with a single operator frequency may be operational in the vehicle at any one time and this shall be an approved radio used exclusively for the hackney carriage/ private hire trade and licensed with an effective radio power (ERP) not exceeding 25 watts.
- 16.4 The use of a Citizen Band (CB) transmitter or receiver is prohibited.

17 METERS

17.1 Hackney carriages

- 17.1.1 A calendar-controlled taximeter must be fitted in the HEADLINING of all PURPOSE BUILT HACKNEY CARRIAGES and must be correctly calibrated, sealed and fully functional in accordance with the current Council approved fare structure and easily visible to passengers.
- 17.1.2 The taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals or other appliances, so as not to be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances.
- 17.1.3 The taximeter shall be positioned so that all letters and figures on the face thereof may be at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in

the vehicle. The dial of the taximeter shall be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of the hiring which is during the hours of darkness as defined for the purposes of the Road Transport Licensing Act 1957 and also at any time at the request of the hirer.

- 17.1.4 When the meter is operating there shall be recorded on the face of the meter in clearly legible figures a fare not exceeding the maximum fare that may be charged for a journey.
- 17.1.5 If the taximeter has been altered for whatever reason, the proprietor of the vehicle shall forthwith report the alteration to the Licensing department so that arrangements for resetting and resealing may be made.
- 17.1.6 An official copy of the Authority's fare chart shall be clearly displayed in the vehicle so as to be plainly visible to passengers carried therein.
- 17.1.7 The vehicle taximeter shall be brought into operation at the commencement of the journey and the fare demanded by the driver shall not be greater than that fixed by this Authority in connection with the hire of hackney carriages. In the event of such a journey commencing in but ending outside Blackpool Borough there may be charged for the journey such fare or rate of fare, if any, as was agreed before the hiring was effected, if no such agreement was made then the fare to be charged should be no greater than that fixed by the Authority in connection with the hire of hackney carriages.

17.2 Private Hire

- 17.2.1 Private hire vehicles must be fitted with a calendar-controlled taximeter. Any taximeter fitted to a private hire vehicle must comply with those conditions and requirements set out at 17.1 above, which appertain to such meters when fitted in hackney carriage vehicles.
- 17.2.2 The current fare chart shall be clearly displayed in the vehicle or there shall be exhibited within the vehicle, so as to be plainly visible to passengers carried therein, a notice indicating that the hire charges for the vehicle are not prescribed by the Authority but are a matter of negotiation with the hirer.

18 TRAILERS

- 18.1 Trailers may only be used with the prior approval of the Authority and subject to the following requirements:
 - (i) Trailers can only be used in connection with private hire bookings and cannot be used for plying for hire on a rank;
 - (ii) The trailer must at all times comply with all requirements of Road Traffic legislation in particular those as laid down in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986;
 - (iii) The vehicle insurance must include cover for towing a trailer;
 - (iv) Trailers must not be left unattended anywhere on the highway;
 - (v) The speed restrictions applicable to trailers must be observed at all times;
 - (vi) A suitable lid or other approved means of enclosure shall be fitted to secure and cover the contents of the trailer whenever in use.
 - (vii) Trailers must conform to the Authority's specifications.

(viii) Trailers must undergo the Authority's inspection and Licensing regime

(ix) Trailers must display an identification plate as specified by the Authority.

19 DISABILITY ACCESS

19.1 In the case of all hackney vehicles, which are built or adapted for disabled passengers, the design of the vehicle should ensure that any wheelchair is loaded from the side rather than the rear of the vehicle. The only exceptions being when hydraulic lifting platforms are fitted to the vehicle.

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

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

(ii) 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.

(iii) A suitable restraint must be available for the occupant of a wheelchair.

(iv) Access ramps or lifts to the vehicle must be securely fixed prior to use, and be able to support the wheelchair, occupant and helper.

(v) Ramps and lifts must be securely stored in the vehicle before it may move off.

19.3 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.

19.4 Where a vehicle is designed or adapted to carry a wheelchair, the proprietor shall ensure that the driver has received sufficient training to load and convey wheelchair bound passengers.

19.5 Subject to the provisions of section 15 above, a sign may be affixed to the outside of the vehicle indicating that it is able to convey passengers in wheelchairs provided that the vehicle has been manufactured or properly adapted for that purpose.

20 VEHICLES POWERED BY LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG)

20.1 An applicant for a licence involving a vehicle that has been converted to run on LPG is required to produce, prior to a licence being issued, a certificate issued by a member of the LPG Association confirming satisfactory installation, examination and testing of the vehicle in accordance with LPG Association Code of Practice; and that the vehicle is therefore considered safe

- 20.2 If an LPG conversion involves installation of an LPG fuel tank in a vehicle's boot space (and possible relocation of the spare wheel) it shall be a requirement that an amount of space shall remain free for the stowage of a reasonable amount of luggage and any spare wheel displaced as a result must be stowed in a location that does not impinge on the passenger carrying area of a vehicle.

21 TINTED WINDOWS

- 21.1 The windows or windscreen of any vehicle shall not have been treated so that less than 75% of light is transmitted through it, unless the following criteria can be met:
- (i) The vehicle is licensed only for private hire purposes and
 - (ii) The vehicle is a stretched limousine or prestige type vehicle (see separate additional conditions for limousines at Appendix B) and
 - (iii) The vehicle will not be engaged at all in any contract for the carriage of school children or based around the carriage of children/young persons
 - (iv) The Operator must, unless such a vehicle has been specifically Requested, inform a hirer that such a vehicle will be supplied.

22 INSURANCE

- 22.1 There shall be a policy of insurance or such security as complies with the requirements of Part IV of the Road Traffic Act 1988 during the currency of the vehicle licence.

23 CHANGES

- 23.1 Any change affecting this vehicle licence must be notified within 14 days of such change, to the Senior Licensing Officer.
- 23.2 When the holder of a vehicle licence wishes to transfer the licence to another person he must notify the Licensing Officer, in writing, before such change takes place. Failure to do so is likely to result in the refusal to renew the licence.

24 INSPECTION

- 24.1 The vehicle licence must be available for inspection at all times on request by any authorised officer of the Authority or any Police Officer.

25 UNAUTHORISED USE

- 25.1 The proprietor of a private hire vehicle or hackney carriage shall not allow the vehicle to be driven and used for hire by any person who does not hold a current private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence, as appropriate, issued by the Authority.

26 ACCIDENT REPORTING

- 26.1 If any licensed vehicle is involved in an accident, this must be reported to the Senior Licensing Officer within 72 hours of the event.
- 26.2 Where, following an accident or damage to a licensed vehicle, it is the intention of the owner or operator to continue licensed use, the vehicle must be inspected (at the owner's or operator's expense) to determine its fitness

for continued use. A Licensing Officer may suspend the use of a licensed vehicle until it is suitably repaired.

26.3 A licensed vehicle which has suffered major accident damage or requires substantial mechanical repair may be replaced by a hire vehicle, provided:

- (i) the damage to, or defect in, the vehicle has been reported;
- (ii) application is made in the usual way for a change of vehicle (albeit temporarily);
- (iii) the replacement vehicle meets the licensing criteria and is suitable to be used for hire purposes;
- (iv) the hiring of the hire vehicle is organised and paid for by the affected licensed owner or operator.

27 MISCELLANEOUS

27.1 The proprietor shall not knowingly cause or permit the vehicle to be used for any illegal or immoral purpose whatsoever.

28 DISPENSATION/ VARIATION

28.1 The Authority may in exceptional circumstances by way of special condition dispense with or vary any of the conditions set out herein.

APPENDIX B

DEFINITION OF A LIMOUSINE

For the purposes of this policy and licence conditions a stretched limousine is defined as follows: -

A stretched limousine is a motor vehicle that has been lengthened by the insertion of an additional body section and modified by a coachbuilder to contain luxury facilities and fixtures.

- that is capable of carrying up to but not exceeding 8 passengers;
- that prior to the introduction of this policy could not currently be licensed by the Authority as a private hire vehicle;
- that is not a decommissioned military or emergency service vehicle.

PRE-LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND LICENSING CONDITIONS

	Issue	Licence Condition	Justification
1	Left Hand Drive Vehicles	Permit Left Hand Drive limousines to be considered for PHV licensing.	The majority of stretched limousines are imported from the US and are left hand drive. The Department for Transport has recommended that Authorities should not refuse to licence limousines simply because they have characteristics which contravene their existing policy, ie. left hand drive.
2	Sideways Seating	Permit limousines with sideways facing seating to be considered for private hire vehicle licensing.	A main characteristic of stretched limousines is their sideways facing bench seats. In line with the Department for Transport's guidance outlined above, the Authority will consider the suitability of limousines with sideways seating for licensing.
3	Signage	The signage on limousines will need to meet local requirements. In Blackpool, those requirements are as follows	Signage serves to distinguish private hire vehicles from ordinary saloon cars and to make them clearly identifiable to the public. However, the naturally distinctive appearance of stretched limousines means that they are very likely to be confused with a private road user's vehicle.
4	Tinted Glass	The drivers side windows and windscreen to be of clear glass and the	It is recognised that the privacy provided by tinted glass in the passenger compartment is a central characteristic of a

		rear view windows of any vehicle shall not have been treated so that less than 70% of light is transmitted through it.	limousine. However, glass in the drive cockpit must satisfy the standards within the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 as amended.
5	Fare Table/Taximeter	Limousines are not required to display a fare table or contain a taximeter.	Stretched limousines often do not operate under a fare system as journeys are generally pre-paid in advance based on the length of time they are hired for.
6	Roadworthiness	The stretched limousine must hold a valid Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) Certificate.	The SVA test comprises of a visual examination of a vehicle and certifies its safety and roadworthiness.
7	Vehicle Age	Stretched limousines to be licensed in accordance with the Council's current private hire vehicle age policy.	To ensure that the limousines licensed by the Authority are in a good and safe condition.
8	Insurance	An appropriate insurance policy must be in place, which covers use of the vehicle for hire and reward.	The Authority has concerns that some limousines may be operating under insurance policies, which do not cover use for hire and reward to take into account that the vehicle has been stretched.
9	Tyres	The limousine must be fitted with tyres that meet both the size and weight specification.	Given the increased weight of the vehicle, tyres of the correct weight and size rating must be used at all times.
10	Vehicle Testing	Licensed limousines must be submitted for testing twice a year to the appropriate Class MOT standard.	To ensure that limousines licensed by the Authority are maintained to high standards and remain safe.
11	Maximum Passengers	The limousine's seating capacity must be reduced where necessary to a maximum of 8 passengers.	Authorities can only licence vehicles with a maximum seating capacity of 8.
		Any seats in the driver's compartment other than the driver's seat shall not be used to carry passengers.	This is to ensure that passengers are not carried in the front of the vehicle to improve driver and passenger safety.

		The vehicle must not carry more than 8 passengers at any time. (A babe in arms is classed as a passenger no matter what their age).	This condition will be enforced by Authority officers performing spot checks on licensed vehicles, and is in line with legislative requirements.
		In any advertisement publicising their limousine service, the operator must state that the vehicle is only licensed to carry 8 passengers.	To inform customers of the maximum carrying capacity of the vehicle.
12	Seat Belts	Seatbelts must be fitted to all forward and rear facing seats and must be worn at all times by passengers whilst the vehicle is in motion. There is no legal requirement for seatbelts on sideways facing seats.	As per construction and use regulations.
13	Fire Extinguisher	The vehicle must contain a fully functional portable multi-purpose powder type fire extinguisher, which bears a kite mark and a last service sticker. The extinguisher must be securely fitted, accessible and ready for use at all times.	For the safety of the vehicle occupants.
14	Alcohol	Alcoholic drinks provided in the vehicle shall be under the terms of an appropriate licence relating to the sale and supply of alcohol.	To comply with alcohol licensing requirements and safeguard public safety.
		Alcohol shall only be served while the vehicle is stationary and afterwards, the bottle shall be placed in a secure receptacle.	

		It 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.	
15	Entertainment	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.	To safeguard child passengers from viewing unsuitable material.
		The limousine operator shall ensure that a performing right licence is held where appropriate.	Many limousines have the capability of playing recorded media for the entertainment of customers and so the operator must ensure the appropriate royalties are paid.
		If the limousine parks to provide some form of entertainment to its passengers, an entertainment licence must be in place in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.	Entertainment regulated under the Act includes TV, video, video games, loudspeakers, or any other activity provided for the passenger's enjoyment.
16	Authority Notices	The proprietor shall when directed by the Authority, display and maintain any notices in a conspicuous position.	To convey information to passengers where appropriate.
17	Advertisements	No other signs, notices or any other marking will be displayed on or in the vehicle without the written permission of the Authority.	To ensure that any materials displayed in the limousine is suitable for public viewing.
18	Luggage	Ensure that loose luggage is not carried within the passenger compartment of the vehicle.	To safeguard passenger safety.

19	Safety Hammer	Vehicles must be supplied with a safety hammer, capable of being used to break the glass of the vehicle, which is securely located in the driver's compartment.	
20	Identification Discs	The proprietor of the vehicle will be issued, by the Authority, with a licence disc which will identify the vehicle as a private hire vehicle on which will be displayed the registration number of that vehicle and the number of passengers to be carried. The proprietor will ensure that the identification disc is displayed on the top left-hand corner of the front windscreen where it can be clearly seen from the outside of the vehicle.	
		No identification disc shall be parted with, lent or used on any other vehicle and the loss or damage of the disc shall be reported to the Authority 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 disc and licence to the Authority within seven days.	

DRIVER AND OPERATOR LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the limousine being licensed as a private hire vehicle with the Authority, the limousine operator is required to hold a private hire operators' licence with the Authority.

All bookings for a limousine licensed as a private hire vehicle must be booked through the licensed private hire operator.

Once licensed as a private hire vehicle the limousine can only be driven by a licensed private hire driver (this licence must also be issued by the Authority).

Details in respect of applications for private hire drivers' licences and Private Hire Operators' Licences can be obtained from the Licensing Office.

DEPOSIT OF LICENCES

If the proprietor permits or employs any other person to drive his private hire limousine vehicle, he shall, before that person commences to drive the vehicle, cause the driver to deliver to him a copy of his private hire driver's licence for retention until such time as the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive that vehicle.

The proprietor of the vehicle will deposit within five working days, a copy of the private hire vehicle licence with the Operator before any booking are accepted.

The loss of any vehicle or driver licence shall be reported to the Authority as soon as possible.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 sections 48 and 77 details an applicants right of appeal. In general terms where an applicant is aggrieved by the Authority's decision to refuse to grant a private hire vehicle licence or by any conditions imposed on a private hire vehicle licence the applicant has a right of appeal to Blackpool Magistrates Court within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the Authority's decision.

VEHICLE TESTING STATIONS

Stretched limousines will normally be required to provide 6 monthly (ie 2 per annum) MOT certificates from a VOSA goods vehicle testing station, or alternatively a local authority VOSA approved class 5 testing station, that has appropriate facilities.

APPENDIX C

1. Application Procedures – Vehicles

- 1.1 When presenting an application, the following documents **MUST** accompany the application form-
- (i) **Registration Book** (which must show the vehicle as belonging to the applicant either wholly or jointly with any other person(s) hereinafter described as proprietor(s) thereof);
 - (ii) **Insurance Certificate** (if a cover note, licence holders will be required to produce further insurance certificates on or before the expiry of the cover note.
 - (iii) **MOT Certificate**
- 1.2 Sight will be required initially of the vehicles Vehicle Registration Document or a Bill of Sale.
- 1.3 Appointments can be arranged for a vehicle to be tested following application being made to the Licensing Department.
- 1.4 Prior to submitting the vehicle for testing owners must ensure that the vehicle is in good condition, i.e., mechanically sound, bodywork in a satisfactory condition and the engine and full chassis steam cleaned.
- 1.5 Owners of vehicles will be subject to a re-charge fee in respect of vehicles that have to be re-submitted for a second inspection test on the grounds of mechanical/M.O.T. related re-inspections pertaining to the specified requirements for hackney/private hire vehicles.
- 1.6 The full retest fee will be charged to drivers/owners who fail to attend for inspections/ reinspections without notifying the Licensing Service.
- 1.7 When a vehicle is successfully tested it should be licensed at the Licensing Offices as soon as practicable.

2. Application procedures - Drivers

- 2.1 Applications for hackney carriage or private hire drivers' licences are not limited and may be made at any time of the year. This is subject to the provisos that the Applicant must have held a full driving licence (which may be a European driving licence) for more than one year, and has attained the age of 18 years.
- 2.2 Applications are to be made on the prescribed application form.

3. New Driver Tests

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 In order to maintain the high standards that the Authority expects of its drivers operating within the Borough a review has taken place of how the suitability of new drivers' knowledge of locations and conditions is assessed.

3.1.2 Applicants for all drivers' licences are required to undergo a written test, by appointment, as part of the process of satisfying the Authority that they are suitable persons to hold such a licence.

- ❑ Applicants will be tested on their knowledge of the Blackpool Borough area's geography, by recording the shortest routes between locations in the area, the start and finish of prominent streets, the locations of major hotels, surgeries, hospitals, clubs and schools. Questions will include Customer Care, knowledge of the dress code and code of Driver Conduct.
- ❑ 45 minutes are allowed to take a 30 question written examination.
- ❑ 4 attempts are permitted annually. After 3 failures a period of 1 month must elapse before the final attempt.
- ❑ In the event of 4 failures a period of 1 year must elapse before further attempts are undertaken.
- ❑ A fee (currently £15.00) is charged for each attempt.

3.2 Driver Test Failure

3.2.1 Applicants who fail to achieve a 24/30-pass rate in any of the written test shall be invited to take a different test on another occasion, subject to the above conditions.

4. The consideration of applications

- 4.1 Upon receipt of a completed application form, an Officer of the Licensing Service shall consider the application, unless there are details, which are missing from the application form, or the supporting documents are incomplete. Where the application is incomplete, it shall not be considered until all the missing details or documents are supplied.
- 4.2 If satisfied, from the information available, that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage and private hire licence, the Officer has the delegated power to grant the application.
- 4.3 Successful applicants will be notified in writing and issued with the appropriate licence. Those who are granted drivers' licences shall be issued with a Drivers' Badge, which shall remain the property of the Authority and must be surrendered when the driver ceases employment as a driver.
- 4.4 Where the Licensing Officer is not satisfied, on the information before him/her, that the applicant should be granted a licence, the matter must be referred to the Public Protection Sub-Committee. The applicant will be advised of the date, time and venue of the Committee at which the application will be considered.
- 4.5 At the Public Protection Sub Committee meeting, the Authority's members present will receive a report from the Senior Licensing Officer, and shall then hear representations from the applicant and may ask any questions of the applicant, before deciding upon whether a licence should be granted. The applicant will be told of the outcome immediately and this will be confirmed in writing within 7 days.

- 4.6 Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of their right to appeal against the decision to the magistrates' court within 21 days of receipt of the formal notice of refusal of the application.

APPENDIX D

1. RELEVANCE OF CONVICTIONS TO APPLICATIONS

The following guidelines will be used to determine the relevance of criminal convictions in relation to applications for hackney carriage and private hire driver's licences. In so stating, this Authority has adopted the guidelines set out in the DOT Circular 2/92 and HO Circular 13/92, subject to certain limited modifications.

2. General Policy

- 2.1 Each application will be determined on its own merits.
- 2.2 A person with a current conviction for serious crime need not be permanently barred from obtaining a licence but will be expected to remain free of conviction for 3 to 5 years, according to the circumstances of the offence, before an application is entertained. Some discretion may be appropriate if the offence is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances. However the overriding consideration should be the protection of the public.
- 2.3 Listed below are some general principles relating to the determination of applications for drivers and operators of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, which will generally be followed where convictions are admitted.

3.1 Minor Traffic Offences

Convictions for minor traffic offences e.g. obstruction, waiting in a restricted street, speeding etc will not prevent a person from proceeding with an application. Multiple occurrences of similar current offences, however, merit the issue of a warning as to future driving standards. If sufficient penalty points have been accrued to require a period of disqualification of the applicant's driving licence then a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle driver's licence may be granted after the restoration of the DVLA driving licence, but only after a period of 12 months has elapsed since the expiry of the disqualification or from the date of any subsequent conviction. A warning will, however, be given about future driving standards.

In circumstances where a driver acquires 12 or more penalty points on his DVLA driving licence but is not disqualified from driving because of the mitigating circumstances put before the magistrates' court, the driver's hackney carriage or private hire licence may still be revoked or suspended. Such a matter will always be dealt with by way of a disciplinary hearing (see Appendix J).

3.2 Major Motoring Offences

An isolated conviction for reckless driving or driving without due care and attention etc will normally merit a warning as to future driving and advice on the standard expected of hackney carriage and private hire drivers. More than one conviction for this type of offence within the last 2 years will normally merit refusal with no further application then being considered until a period of 1 to 3 years free from convictions has elapsed. A single conviction for causing death by careless driving or by dangerous driving will be reported to the Public Protection Sub-Committee for determination on the merits of the case.

3.3 **Applications where Minor Traffic Offences are not Declared**

Where an applicant has failed to disclose one or more of the offences mentioned above on their application form but such offences are subsequently uncovered during a DVLA check or by any other means, the licensing officer may, if he thinks fit, still issue the licence subject to a warning regarding future conduct. If, however, he considers that there was a premeditated intent to deceive, he will normally refer the matter to the Public Protection Sub-Committee to be dealt with by way of a disciplinary hearing (see Appendix J).

3.4 **Drunkenness**

3.4.1 **With a motor vehicle**

A serious view will be taken of convictions of driving or being in charge of a vehicle whilst under the influence of drink. An isolated incident may not necessarily debar an applicant but severe warnings will be given as to future behaviour. More than one conviction for these offences will raise grave doubts as to the applicant's fitness to hold a licence. At least 3 years should have elapsed (after the restoration of the driving licence) before such an applicant is considered for a licence. If there is any suggestion that the applicant is an alcoholic, a special medical examination will be arranged before the application is entertained. If the applicant is found to be an alcoholic, a period of 3 years must elapse after treatment is complete before a further licence application is considered.

3.4.2 **Not in a motor vehicle**

An isolated conviction for drunkenness need not debar an applicant from gaining a licence. However, a number of convictions for drunkenness could indicate a medical problem necessitating critical examination (see (i) above). In some cases, a warning may be sufficient.

3.5 **Drugs**

An applicant with a conviction for a drug related offence is required to show a period of at least 3 years free of convictions before an application is entertained or 5 years after detoxification treatment if he/she was an addict.

3.6 **Sexual or Indecency Offences**

As hackney carriage and private hire drivers often carry unaccompanied passengers, applicants with convictions for indecent exposure, indecent assault, importuning, or any of the more serious sexual offences, will normally be refused until they can show a substantial period (normally 5 years) free of such offences. More than one conviction of this kind will preclude consideration for at least 5 years. In either case, if a licence is granted a severe warning as to future conduct should be issued.

3.7 **Violence**

As hackney carriage and private hire drivers maintain close contact with the public, a firm line will be taken with applicants who have convictions for grievous bodily harm, wounding or assault. At least 3 years free of such convictions must be shown before an application is entertained and even then a severe warning will be administered.

3.8 Dishonesty

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are expected to be persons of trust. The widespread practice of delivering unaccompanied property is indicative of the trust that business people place in drivers. Moreover, it is comparatively easy for dishonest drivers to defraud the public, for example, by demanding more than the legal fare. Overseas visitors can be confused by the change in currency and become 'fair game' for an unscrupulous driver. For these reasons a serious view will be taken of any convictions involving dishonesty. In general, a period of 3 to 5 years free of convictions will be required before an application is entertained.

3.9 Other Offences and special circumstances

3.9.1 If the applicant has declared any other offences not listed above or the circumstances of the case justify it, the licensing officer will, if he considers it appropriate, refer the application to the Public Protection Sub-Committee for determination.

3.9.2 Receipt of any criminal conviction or a warning letter, severe warning letter or period of suspension of a licence will result in the driver having to submit to Annual CRB checks until a period of 5 years conviction or warning letter free has expired. Thereafter a CRB check will last for a period of 3 years.

4. PRINCIPLES OF THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974

4.1 Under the 1974 Act, criminal convictions can become spent after a certain period of time, and once spent, for many purposes, can be disregarded completely.

4.2 The possibility of rehabilitation and the length of time before rehabilitation occurs depends on the sentence imposed, and not the offence committed.

4.3 Where a person is sentenced to imprisonment for a period exceeding 30 months, the conviction can never become spent.

4.4 Despite the above, **the principles of the Act do not apply to applicants for hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences.** This is because the driving of taxis is listed as a "Regulated Occupation" in relation to which questions may be asked as to the suitability of individuals to be granted a licence.

4.5 Although the Act does not prevent judicial authorities (inclusive of the Licensing Authority) from taking spent convictions into account, such convictions are only admissible in so far as they are relevant to the issue as to whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

4.6 The determination as to whether certain convictions are spent, therefore, may be a relevant exercise.

4.7 The rehabilitation periods to which reference is most commonly made are set out below. For a detailed commentary on the periods of rehabilitation applicable to all sentencing options, reference will need to be made to a specialist textbook on the Act.

	Sentence	Rehabilitation Period
(a)	Sentence of imprisonment or detention exceeding 6 months but not exceeding 30 months	10 years
(b)	Sentence of cashiering, discharge with ignominy or dismissal with disgrace from Her Majesty's Service	10 years

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|
| (c) | Sentence of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months | 7 years |
| (d) | Sentence of dismissal from Her Majesty's Service | 7 years |
| (e) | Sentence of detention in respect of a conviction in service disciplinary proceedings | 5 years |
| (f) | A fine | 5 years |
| (g) | Absolute discharge | 6 months |
| (h) | Conditional discharge | 1 year or date of expiry of order |
| (i) | Community Rehabilitation Order | 5 years |

APPENDIX E

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. Conduct of Driver

1.1 The holder of a private hire driver's licence (driver) shall comply with the following conditions, which should be read in conjunction with the Code of Good Conduct set out in Appendix F.

1.2 The driver shall be respectably dressed and clean and tidy in appearance.

1.3 The driver shall at all times, when acting in accordance with the drivers licence granted to him, wear such badge as supplied by the Authority in such position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible at all times. He shall not lend the badge to any other person or cause or permit any other person to wear it and on termination or surrender of a Driver's licence, he shall return the badge to the Authority immediately.

1.4 The driver shall behave in a civil, polite and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.

1.5 The driver shall not wilfully or negligently cause or permit the vehicle licence plate to be concealed from public view or allow the licence plate to be so defaced as to make any figure or information illegible.

1.6 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.

1.7 The driver when hired to drive to a particular destination shall proceed to that destination by the shortest route.

1.8 The driver shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such vehicle any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the Vehicle Licence.

1.9 The driver shall convey a reasonable amount of luggage and afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading luggage.

1.10 The driver must not solicit, by calling out or otherwise importune, any person to hire or be carried for hire, and must not accept an offer for the hire of the vehicle except where that is first communicated to the driver by telephone.

1.11 The vehicle shall be presented in a clean and tidy condition for each journey.

1.12 The Private Hire Vehicle must only be driven with the consent of the proprietor of the vehicle.

1.13 The driver must comply with any hirer's request not to smoke, drink or eat in the vehicle, or play any radio or sound equipment, which is not connected with the operation of the business.

1.14 The driver must ensure that the noise emitted from any sound equipment in the vehicle does not cause annoyance to any persons, whether inside or outside the vehicle.

1.15 The driver shall not operate the horn as a means of signalling that the vehicle has arrived.

1.16 The driver must not cause or permit the vehicle to stand on a road or in a public place as to suggest that it is plying for hire, or use any hackney carriage stand within the Blackpool Borough area.

1.17 Drivers must not use a mobile phone whilst driving unless it is designed for hands-free operation.

2. Fitness of Driver

2.1 The driver of a Private Hire Vehicle must at any time, or at such intervals as the Authority may reasonably require, produce a certificate in the form prescribed by the Authority by a Registered Medical Practitioner to the effect that he/she is, or continues to be, physically fit to be a driver of a Private Hire vehicle.

2.2 Whether or not such a Certificate is produced, the driver must, if required by the Authority at any time, undergo a medical examination by a Registered Medical Practitioner selected by the Authority.

2.3 The driver is asked to cease driving any Private Hire vehicle and contact the Authority immediately if they know of any medical condition, which may affect their driving ability and the health and safety of themselves and any passengers.

3. Fares and journeys

3.1 The driver/operator of a Private Hire vehicle may make their own agreement with the hirer as to the fare for a particular journey.

3.2 The driver shall, if requested by the hirer, provide him/her with a written receipt for the fare paid.

3.3 If the Private Hire Vehicle is fitted with a taximeter, then the driver of a Private Hire vehicle shall

(i) unless the hirer expresses at the commencement of the journey his desire to engage by time, bring the meter into operation at the commencement of the journey and

(ii) bring the machinery of the taxi meter into action by moving the said key, flag or other device, so that the word 'HIRED' is legible on the face of the taximeter before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring.

(iii) cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of a hiring which is during the hours of darkness as defined for the purposes of the

Road Traffic Act 1972, and also at any other time at the request of the hirer.

(iv) not demand from any hirer of a Private Hire vehicle a fare in excess of any previously agreed for that hiring between the hirer and the operator or, if the vehicle is fitted with a fare meter, the fare shown on the face of the meter.

3.4 In the event of a journey commencing in but ending outside the Blackpool Borough area there may be charged, for the journey, such fare or rate if any as was agreed before the hiring was affected. If no such agreement was made then the fare to be charged should be no greater than that fixed by the Authority in connection with the hire of Hackney Carriages.

4. Duties of Licence Holder

- 4.1 Any change affecting this licence must be notified within 14 days of such to the Licensing Officer.
- 4.2 The Private Hire Driver's licence must be made available for inspection, on request, by any authorised officer of the Authority or any Police Officer.
- 4.3 The driver must notify the Authority, within seven days of starting or terminating employment, as to the name and address of the proprietor concerned, and the date when the employment either started or ended.
- 4.4 The private hire driver's licence must be presented to the proprietor concerned, at the beginning of an employment.
- 4.5 All licences, badges and plates issued remain the property of the Authority at all times. They must be returned forthwith when employment as a licensed driver ceases, the Licence expires and is not renewed or where the Licence is suspended or revoked.
- 4.6 The driver must notify the Authority, within 7 days, of any change of address.
- 4.7 The driver must notify the Authority, within a period of 7 days, of any conviction for an offence, or of any receipt of a fixed penalty, imposed on him/her whilst the licence is in force.

5. Lost Property

- 5.1 A driver of a Private Hire Vehicle 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, carry it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours to the nearest Police Station and leave it in the custody of an authorised officer on his giving a receipt for it.

6. Accident Reporting

- 6.1 A Proprietor or Driver of a Private Hire vehicle shall report to the Authority as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case within 72 hours of the occurrence, any accident to a Private Hire vehicle causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of persons using the vehicle.

7. The carriage of animals

- 7.1 A driver must not carry in a Private Hire vehicle any animal, which belongs to, or is being looked after by, themselves, the owner or operator of the vehicle while it is being used as a Private Hire vehicle.
- 7.2 Animals in the custody of passengers may be carried, at the driver's discretion, provided they are restrained in a safe manner.
- 7.3 A driver must, however carry assistance dogs when necessary. Assistance dogs include guide dogs for the blind or partially sighted, hearing dogs for the hard of hearing, and other assistance dogs, which assist disabled people with a physical impairment.
- 7.4 Any driver with a medical condition, which may be exacerbated by dogs, may apply for exemption from this condition. A certificate of exemption is supplied on production of suitable medical evidence.

8. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

8.1 All drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles:

- 8.1.1 must be fully conversant with the correct method of operation of all ramps, lifts and wheelchair restraints fitted to the vehicle.
 - 8.1.2 Must, before any movement of the vehicle takes place, ensure that all wheelchairs are firmly secured to the vehicle using an approved restraining system and the brakes of the wheelchair have been applied.
 - 8.1.3 Must ensure that any wheelchairs, equipment and passengers are carried in such a manner that no danger is likely to be caused to those passengers or to anyone else, in accordance with regulations, S.100 of the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986.
 - 8.1.4 Shall, in the event of a passenger who requires to be carried seated in a wheelchair, presenting themselves at a taxi rank or hailing a hackney carriage on the street and the hackney carriage which the passenger has presented themselves to or hailed is not wheelchair accessible either:
 - (a) divert the passenger to a wheelchair accessible vehicle on the rank if one is available or
 - (a) use their phone or radio to contact an operator of a wheelchair accessible hackney carriage to arrange to collect the passenger as soon as possible.
- 8.2 Drivers providing medical evidence (over and above the required medical) that they are physical incapable of loading an adult confined to an un-powered wheelchair may apply to be issued with a wheelchair loading exemption badge bearing their photograph. A cost will be charged (currently £5).

APPENDIX F

CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT FOR LICENSED DRIVERS

This Code of Good Conduct should be read in conjunction with the other statutory and policy requirements set out in this document.

1 Responsibility to the Trade

Licence holders shall endeavour to promote the image of the Hackney Carriage and Private hire trade by:

- (a) complying with this Code of Good Conduct;
- (b) complying with all the Conditions of their Licence and the Authority's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy;
- (c) behaving in a civil, orderly and responsible manner at all times.
- (d) licence holders must sign to acknowledge the Code of Conduct

2 Responsibility to Clients

Licence holders shall:

- (a) maintain their vehicles in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times;
- (b) keep their vehicles clean and suitable for hire to the public at all times;
- (c) attend punctually when undertaking pre-booked hiring;
- (d) assist, where necessary, passengers into and out of vehicles;
- (e) offer passengers reasonable assistance with luggage.
- (f) All Hackney and Private Hire Vehicles will be smoke-free areas at all times. This includes occasions when no passengers are being carried.

3 Responsibility to Residents

To avoid nuisance to residents when picking up or waiting for a fare, a driver shall:

- (a) not sound the vehicle's horn illegally;
- (b) keep the volume of radio/cassette player and VHF radios to a minimum;
- (c) switch off the engine if required to wait;
- (d) take whatever additional action is necessary to avoid disturbance to residents in the neighbourhood.

At taxi ranks and other places where hackney carriages ply for hire by forming queues, drivers shall, in addition to the requirements above:

- (a) rank in an orderly manner and proceed along the rank in order and promptly;
- (b) remain in the vehicle.

At private hire offices a licence holder shall:

- (a) not undertake servicing or repairs of vehicles;
- (b) not allow their radio/cassette players or VHF radios to cause disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood;
- (c) take whatever additional action is necessary to avoid disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood, which might arise from the conduct of their business.

4 General

Drivers shall:

- (a) pay attention to personal hygiene and dress so as to present a professional image to the public;
- (b) be polite, helpful and fair to passengers;
- (c) drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians and in particular shall not use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving;
- (d) obey all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all time;
- (e) not smoke at any time when inside the vehicle;
- (f) not consume alcohol* immediately before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle;
- (g) not drive while having misused legal or illegal drugs;
- (h) fulfil their responsibility to ensure compliance with legislation regarding the length of working hours;
- (i) not eat in the vehicle in the presence of customers

5 Disciplinary Hearings

Drivers should be aware of the powers the Authority has to take action, by way of suspension, revocation or refusal to renew a driver's licences where

- (a) the driver has been convicted, since the grant of the licence, of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency or violence
- (b) the driver has been convicted of an offence under the legislation or Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy relating to taxi regulation
- (c) there is a breach of condition or this code

Details of the workings of the disciplinary hearings are set out in Appendix J.
***ANY AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS CAN AFFECT A DRIVER'S JUDGEMENT**

APPENDIX G

DRESS CODE FOR LICENSED DRIVERS

The Authority is committed to encouraging the professional image of the trade. The Authority 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.

The Authority does not impose such standards by way of conditions to any licence. It is expected, however, that such standards will be maintained at all times.

Acceptable Standards of Dress within this code

(1) Tops

- ❖ Shirts, blouses, T-shirts, or sweat tops should cover the shoulders and be capable of being worn inside trousers or shorts.
- ❖ Shirts or blouses can be worn with a tie or open-necked.

(2) Trousers/Shorts/Skirts

- ❖ Trousers may be either full length or shorts.
- ❖ Shorts should be tailored.
- ❖ It is recommended that female drivers do not wear short skirts for personal safety reasons.

(3) Footwear

- ❖ Footwear should fit around the heel of the foot.(Safety shoes with protected toecaps are recommended.)

Unacceptable Standards of Dress within this Code

The following are deemed to be unacceptable:

- ❖ Bare chests
- ❖ Clothing or footwear which is unclean or damaged
- ❖ Clothing printed with words, logos or graphics, which might offend
- ❖ Sports shirts e.g. football, rugby or cricket tops or track suits
- ❖ Studs or sharp-edged clothing
- ❖ Beach-type footwear (e.g. flip-flops or mules)
- ❖ Footwear with pronounced heels
- ❖ Baseball caps
- ❖ Sports shorts

APPENDIX H

PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR'S LICENCE CONDITIONS

1 Standards of Service

The operator shall:

- 1.1 Provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public at all reasonable times.
- 1.2 Ensure that office staff, employed by operator, act in a civil and orderly manner at all times.
- 1.3 Ensure, when a vehicle has been hired, that it arrives punctually at the appointed place, unless delayed by unforeseen circumstances.
- 1.4 Ensure that premises provided for the purpose of booking or waiting are kept clean and are adequately lit, heated and ventilated.
- 1.5 Ensure that any waiting area provided has adequate seating facilities and telephone facilities are in good working order.
- 1.6 Fulfil his responsibilities to ensure compliance with legislation regarding the length of working hours.

2 Records

Records, which must be kept by operators, under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall be kept in a non-erasable form in a suitable log or book, the pages of which are numbered consecutively.

2.1 Bookings

2.2.1 Prior to each journey, the operator shall enter the following particulars of every booking of a private hire vehicle accepted, pursuant to section 56 (2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, containing the following particulars, namely: -

- the date of the booking
- the name of the hirer
- the time of pick-up
- the address of the point of pick-up
- the time at which a driver was allocated to the booking
- the plate number (or other identification) of the vehicle allocated

2.2 Vehicles

2.2.2 The operator shall keep records of the particulars of all private hire vehicles operated by him/her, pursuant to section 56 (3) of the Act such details to include the following particulars, namely: -

- type, Make, Model, Colour and Engine Size of Vehicles
- the year when the vehicle was first licensed for private hire
- vehicle Registration Numbers
- the number of seats for passengers
- owners

- insurance details of vehicles
- whether a meter is fitted
- Private Hire Vehicle Plate Numbers

2.3 Drivers

2.3.1 The operator shall keep records of the particulars of all drivers of private hire vehicles operated by him/her, pursuant to section 56 (3) of the Act such details to include the following particulars, namely:-

- details as to the drivers of the vehicles, and their call signs
- details of when any new driver begins service
- details of when any driver's service ceases
- details of any change of address of any driver in service
- if he/she becomes aware that any driver is suffering from any illness, disability or condition which may affect the driver's ability to safely carry out his/her duties, details of that information
- expiry dates of driver's badges and vehicle licences

All records maintained by the operator shall be kept for at least 12 months after entry and shall be produced for inspection, on request, by any authorised officer.

3 Complaints

The operator shall immediately, upon receipt, notify the Licensing Office in writing of any complaints concerning a contract for hire arising from his/her business, such notification to include the action taken or proposed as a result of the complaint.

4 Change of Address, etc

The operator shall notify the Authority in writing of any change affecting this licence including change of address (including any address from which he operates or otherwise conducts his business), which takes place during the currency of the licence. Such notice shall be given within 14 days of the change to the Licensing Officer.

5 Disclosure of Convictions

The operator shall, within 7 days of conviction, notify the Licensing Officer in writing of any conviction or fixed penalty imposed on him during the currency of his/her operator's licence. If the operator is a company or partnership, this requirement shall apply if any of the directors or partners receives a conviction or fixed penalty.

6 Insurance

The operator shall ensure that a certificate of motor insurance covers every private hire vehicle operated by him under the licence, which is compliant with the Road Traffic Act 1988 as regards the carriage of passengers for hire or reward.

If the Operator has premises to which the public have access, in connection with the hiring of vehicles, he shall ensure that there is public liability

insurance in force, which indemnifies him against any claim for loss, damage or personal injury by any person using those premises.

7 Private Hire Driver's Licences

The operator shall satisfy himself that every driver engaged by him has acquired a private hire driver's licence and has a badge issued by the Licensing Office.

8 Display of Terms and Conditions

The operator shall, at all times, keep a copy of these conditions at any premises used by him/her for a private hire business and shall make the same available for inspection by fare-paying passengers.

9 Inspection of Licence

The Operators Licence shall be available for inspection on request by any authorised officer of the Authority or any Police Officer.

Note: Planning Consent

To operate a private hire business from home, planning permission, for such business use, will normally be required. A Private Hire Operator's Licence will not be granted without evidence that either planning permission has been issued for the premises concerned or planning permission is not required for the limited use proposed

APPENDIX I

TAXI LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY & PRACTICE

1 Enforcement Policy Statement

- 1.1 It is the policy of the Authority 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. All enforcement action is carried out in compliance with the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy.
- 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 Specific advice on the issue of licences and enforcement action is contained elsewhere in the Authority's Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy, which sets out the general principals to be followed in taking enforcement decisions.
- 1.4 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 Head of Quality Services or above before the decision is taken (unless it is considered that there is significant risk to the public in delaying the decision).
- 1.5 Authorised officers must be fully acquainted with the requirements of the policy and appropriate training will be provided where required.
- 1.6 Officers will be authorised by the Head of Quality Services 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, and 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-

2.3.1 **Taxi Licence Applications**

- grant licences subject to the Authority's Standard Conditions
- refuse to grant a licence.

2.3.2 **Enforcement Action**

- take no action;
- take informal action;
- use statutory notices, (stop notices etc.);
- suspend a licence;
- revoke a licence;
- use formal 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 in accordance with the Environmental Services Policy. See Appendix I.

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 Public Protection Sub-Committee

4.1 An offending individual or company may be summoned before the Public Protection Sub-Committee to answer allegations of breaches of relevant legislation, Byelaws or conditions attached to licences.

4.2 The criteria for bringing applicants for licences before the Committee is contained in Policy Guidelines reproduced as Appendix D.

4.3 Current licence holders who report convictions or breach relevant legislation during the period of their licence may be brought before the Public

Protection Sub-Committee. The criteria for such action is also contained in Policy Guidelines adopted by the Authority and reproduced as Appendix J.

4.4 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 Taxi Licensing 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 Authority'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.

5.2 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 Public Protection Sub-Committee may be made 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. In cases of danger to the travelling public, suspension can be immediate whether or not an Appeal is either lodged or contemplated (Road Safety Act 2006 Section 52)

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 Authority 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, which ensure a consistent approach. (More detailed guidance on the general criteria to be applied when considering a prosecution can be found in the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy.

7.2 The circumstances which 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 In addition to being satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, there must be a positive decision, based on the relevant criteria that it is in the public's interest to prosecute. The Code for Crown Prosecutors, (January 1992) issued by the Crown Prosecution Service, provides guidance, which will be considered, including relevant public interest criteria.
- 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 co-operate;
 - 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 formal caution in accordance with the Home Office Circular 18/1994 would be more appropriate or effective. See section 8 of this Policy for advice in respect of formal cautions.

8 Formal Cautions

- 8.1 A formal 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 formal 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 formal 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 formal caution. A formal 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 formal caution and no pressure should be applied to the person to accept a caution).
- 8.5 Formal cautions must be used in accordance with the Home Office Circular.
- 8.6 Where a person declines the offer of a formal 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 receipt of a notification of a conviction or an adverse vehicle inspection, the licence holder will be informed of the action intended to be taken as soon as possible.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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; and
 - clearly indicate any recommendations of good practice under an appropriate heading, to show that they are not a legal requirement.
- 9.4 The clear distinction between legal requirements and matters, which are recommended as good practice in all enforcement action, even if only giving verbal advice, is vitally important.

APPENDIX J

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH OFFENCES COMMITTED DURING THE TERM OF A LICENCE

1. General Policy

Each case will be determined on its own merits, however, listed below are some general principles relating to the determination of applications for drivers and operators of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles which are generally to be followed.

The holders of both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle driver's licences must immediately report all criminal convictions and driving offences, which occur during the currency of their licence to the licensing officer. In addition, breaches of the relevant legislation or conditions attached to driver, operator and vehicle licences may come to light following complaints, enforcement action or investigations. The action to be followed in response to such matters will be determined on its own merits, however, set out below are some general principals which may be followed. These actions will be taken irrespective of any penalty points which may be assigned to a driver's record in accordance with the policy detailed at Appendix K.

2. Matters normally to be dealt with by the Licensing Officer under delegated powers

The Senior Licensing Officer may deal directly with less serious first offences without referring the matter to the Public Protection Sub Committee (the Committee). They may choose to take no action or may issue warnings as to future conduct.

2.1 Convictions for minor traffic offences

In the case of a single conviction no action will normally be warranted. However, if more than one offence is committed, a warning as to future driving standards will normally be issued.

2.2 Disqualification from driving following the 'Totting Up' procedure or for drink driving

As the driver ceases to have a valid DVLA driving licence, his taxi driver's licence must be revoked. An application for a new licence may be made once the DVLA licence is restored and this will be treated in accordance with the appropriate guidelines for new applications.

2.3 Failure to report a conviction

The failure to report a conviction within a reasonable time will normally be dealt with by issuing a written warning in addition to any further actions that may be warranted by the nature of the offence.

2.4 Failure to report an accident

The failure to report an accident to the licensing officer will normally be dealt with, in the first instance, by issuing a written warning.

2.5 Defective Vehicles

If during routine enforcement work or following the investigation of a complaint, a defect is identified on a licensed vehicle that could affect safety such as a worn tyre, the licensing officer will issue a stop notice with immediate effect. This will stop the vehicle being used as a taxi or private hire vehicle, as appropriate, until the defect is remedied and the repair certified by the Authority's appointed garage.

2.6 Refusal to carry a passenger in a hackney carriage

In these circumstances the driver will be invited to state the reasons for his actions and if the licensing officer is satisfied that the driver had a justifiable reason, then no action will be taken. If, however, there appears to be no acceptable justification for the refusal, or if the refusal involves a person deemed to be vulnerable, elderly, disabled or a minority group, prosecution will be considered.

2.7 Unauthorised ranking

This will be, dependent on circumstances. Where local residents are impeded by the practice or where there are road safety considerations or obstruction to emergency services vehicles, prosecution will be considered.

2.8 Private hire vehicle plying for hire

This will normally result in prosecution.

2.9 Exceeding the allowed number of passengers

This will normally result in prosecution.

2.10 Touting for business

This will normally result in at least the issue of a written warning. Subsequent contraventions will result in referral to the Committee.

2.11 Illegal advertising on vehicle

This will normally result in the issue of a Stop Notice. Subsequent contraventions will result in referral to the Committee. The offending advertisement must be immediately removed.

2.12 Failure to display plates or badges

This would normally result in at least a Stop Notice. Subsequent contraventions will result in referral to the Committee.

2.13 Confirmed complaints of rude or aggressive behaviour

All complaints will be documented and investigated. More than two complaints OF A SIMILAR NATURE WITHIN A 12-MONTH PERIOD WILL TRIGGER REFERRAL TO THE Public Protection Sub Committee. In less serious cases, a warning as to future conduct will be given. However, if the nature or level of aggression leads the licensing officer to be concerned about public safety the matter will be brought before the Sub Committee.

2.14 Complaints against breaches of the drivers dress code

This will, dependent on circumstances, result in the driver being immediately sent home and the issue of a warning. Persistent contraventions will result in referral to the Committee.

2.15 Presence in the vehicle of unauthorised telecommunication apparatus

This will normally result in the issue of a written warning. Subsequent contraventions will result in referral to the Committee.

2.16 Failure to comply with a lawful requirement or instruction from an authorised officer of the council or a police constable.

The holders of licences are legally obliged, under the relevant legislation, to comply with a number of requirements or instructions given to them by an authorised officer of the Authority or a police constable. Failure to comply with a reasonable lawful request will result in prosecution.

2.17 Obstructing an authorised officer of the Authority or a Police Constable in the execution of his duty

If the holder of a licence has, in the officer's opinion, obstructed an authorised officer of the Authority or a Police Constable in carrying out their duties under the statutes, it will be considered a very serious matter and will result in a prosecution.

2.18 Prosecutions

In circumstances where justified within this enforcement policy, the senior licensing officer may institute proceedings to prosecute offenders without first referring the matter to the Committee.

3. Matters to be dealt with by the Public Protection Sub Committee

The Public Protection Sub Committee will be asked to deal with the more serious offences and/or to determine the most appropriate action where further offences occur within 2 years of the issue of a warning or other informal action. The committee may choose to take any actions open to the licensing officer. Whilst it is not possible to cover every conceivable offence, listed below are those specific matters, which will always be referred to the Committee. The Public Protection Sub Committee may decide to take any of the actions open to them dependent on the facts of each particular case. However also listed below are some general suggestions as to appropriate sanctions to be imposed.

3.1 Conviction of a major traffic offence or insurance offences

The actions taken will be dependent on the facts of the case and the representations made. In principal the Committee will not seek to punish an offender twice but to take measures to ensure that the licensee is aware of the importance of maintaining a high standard of driving. A warning will generally be an appropriate decision. However, if the offence is particularly serious or the circumstances warrant it, a short suspension of the licence may be imposed.

3.2 Conviction for drunkenness not in a motor vehicle

A single isolated offence may be dealt with by a warning. However, if the circumstances of the case establish that violence has been involved or that the licensee drinks excessively, a suspension of the licence may be considered along with a recommendation that some help be obtained to deal with the problem. If the Committee are not satisfied with the response of the licensee to this suggestion they may consider revocation of the licence appropriate.

3.3 Conviction for drug related offences and for indecency

The nature of such offences is such that public safety is always going to be of concern. Whilst any decision will be made having regard to the facts of the case, such a conviction may result in the licence being revoked.

3.4 Convictions for violence

The Committee must carefully consider the facts of the case and decide whether the offender's actions are likely to be repeated or whether the offence was out of character. The aim should not be to punish twice but to ensure that public safety is not compromised.

If, after due consideration it is thought that there is a possibility of further offences being committed, then a revocation of the licence may be justified. On the other hand if the offence was thought to be isolated and out of character a lesser penalty may be imposed.

3.5 Convictions for dishonesty

The penalty imposed for such contraventions must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence. Again the purpose is not to punish an individual twice but to ensure that the licensee is made absolutely clear as to the level of trust expected of licensed drivers and operators. In serious cases a lengthy suspension or revocation may be justified particularly if the offence was connected with his work. If the offence was less serious or isolated a lesser penalty including a shorter suspension or even a warning may be sufficient to make a driver realise the importance of honesty in his chosen profession.

3.6 Overcharging a passenger

It is relatively easy for a driver to defraud the public because of the nature and complexity of the tariff system. Overcharging should, therefore, be considered a serious breach of trust, which should be dealt with by imposing a significant penalty. A suspension or even revocation of a licence may, therefore, be justified.

3.7 Persistent failure to comply with a lawful requirement or instruction from an authorised officer of the Authority or a police constable

In circumstances where an offender has failed to comply with a lawful requirement of an officer, despite all reasonable attempts to make him do so, the Committee will decide what action to take having regard to any excuses made for such failure. This may involve either a suspension or revocation of a licence.

3.8 Other contraventions

Any offence, which in the opinion of the licensing officer is best dealt with by the Committee, may be brought before them. Such cases, which may include those where requirements have been persistently breached and where warnings have not been heeded, will be decided in the light of the facts of the case and the representations made. Any penalty imposed must be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and the over riding requirement to ensure public safety.

3.9 Hearings before the Public Protection Sub-Committee

Introduction

Meetings of the Public Protection Sub Committee will be convened to consider appropriate disciplinary measures involving proprietors, operators and drivers, whenever they have been convicted of offences before the courts, or where action has been taken as a result of breaches of the law or conditions imposed under the relevant licence. The purpose of such meetings shall be for the Committee to consider which, if any, of the options available should be implemented.

The Options Available

The Public Protection Sub Committee, after the details of the referral have been outlined, and the licence holder has been given the opportunity to address the hearing, may order one of the following:

- The suspension of the licence;
- The revocation of the licence;
- A refusal to renew a licence;
- The imposition of further conditions;
- A severe warning letter
- A Warning letter
- No further action to be taken.

The Committee may also recommend the cautioning or prosecution of licence holders, in circumstances where there are persistent or serious breaches of conditions, which have not been dealt with otherwise.

APPENDI K

OFFENCES & PENALTIES - HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Introduction

Two statutes principally create offences relating to Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles:

- i) Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
- ii) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The offences are set out below under the relevant statute

In relation to the maximum penalties specified, the levels of fine are currently as follows:

Level 1	-	£200;
Level 2	-	£500;
Level 3	-	£1,000;
Level 4	-	£2,500.

a) Town Police Clauses Act 1847

HACKNEYS		
Section	Offence	Maximum Penalty
40	Giving false information on application for HC licence.	Level 1
44	Failure to notify change of address of HC proprietor.	Level 1
45	Plying for hire without HC proprietor's licence.	Level 4
47	Driving a HC without HC driver's licence.	Level 3
47	Lending or parting with HC driver's licence.	Level 3
47	HC proprietor employing unlicensed driver.	Level 3
48	Failure by HC proprietor to hold HC driver's licence.	Level 1
48	Failure by HC proprietor to produce HC driver's licence.	Level 1
52	Failure to display HC plate.	Level 1
53	Refusal to take a fare.	Level 2
54	Charging more than the agreed fare.	Level 1
55	Obtaining more than the legal fare.	Level 3 and 1 month's imprisonment
56	Travelling less than the lawful distance for an agreed fare.	Level 1
57	Failing to wait after a deposit to wait has been paid.	Level 1
58	Charging more than the legal fare.	Level 3
59	Carrying other person than the hirer without consent.	Level 1
60	Driving HC without proprietor's consent.	Level 1
60	Allowing another to drive HC without proprietor's consent.	Level 1
61	Drunken driving of HC	Level 1
61	Wanton or furious driving leading to injury or danger.	Level 1
62	Driver leaving HC unattended.	Level 1
64	HC driver obstructing other HC's.	Level 1

b) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976

Section	Offence	Maximum Penalty
49	Failure to notify the transfer of a HC proprietor's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(1)	Failure to present a HC for inspection, as required.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(2)	Failure to inform the Authority where the HC is stored, if requested.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(3)	Failure to report an accident to the Authority.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(4)	Failure to produce the HC proprietor's licence and insurance certificate.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
53(3)	Failure to produce the HC driver's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
57	Making a false statement or withholding information to obtain a HC driver's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
58(2)	Failure to return a plate after notice given following expiry, revocation or suspension of a HC proprietor's licence.	Level 3 + fine of £10/day
61(2)	Failure to surrender a driver's licence after suspension, revocation or refusal to renew.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
64	Permitting any vehicle other than a HC to wait on a HC stand.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
66	Charging more than the meter fare for a journey ending outside the district, without prior agreement.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
67	Charging more than the meter fare when HC used as private hire vehicle.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
69	Unnecessarily prolonging a journey.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
71	Interfering with a taximeter.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(a)	Obstruction of an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(b)	Failure to comply with a requirement of an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(c)	Failure to give information or assistance to an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(a)	Using an unlicensed PH vehicle.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(b)	Driving a PH vehicle without a PH driver's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(c)	Proprietor of a PH vehicle using an unlicensed driver.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(d)	Operating a PH vehicle without a PH operator's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(e)	Operating a vehicle as a PH vehicle when the vehicle is not licensed as a PH vehicle.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
46(1)(e)	Operating a PH vehicle when the driver is not licensed as a PH driver.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
48(6)	Failure to display a PH vehicle plate.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
49	Failure to notify transfer of a PH vehicle licence.	Level 3

PRIVATE HIRE		
Section	Offence	Maximum Penalty
50(1)	Failure to present PH vehicle for an inspection, as required.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(2)	Failure to inform the Authority where the PH vehicle is stored, if requested.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(3)	Failure to report an accident to the Authority.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
50(4)	Failure to produce a PH vehicle licence and an insurance certificate.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
53(3)	Failure to produce a PH driver's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
54(2)	Failure to wear a PH driver's badge.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
56(2)	Failure by a PH operator to keep records of bookings.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
56(3)	Failure by a PH operator to keep records of PH vehicles operated by him.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
56(4)	Failure to produce a PH operator's licence on request.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
57	Making false statement or withholding information to obtain a PH driver or operator's licence.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
58(2)	Failure to return plate after notice given following expiry, revocation or suspension of a PH vehicle licence.	Level 3 + fine of £10/day
61(2)	Failure to surrender a driver's licence after suspension, revocation or refusal to renew.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
67	Charging more than the meter fare when a HC used as PH vehicle.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
69	Unnecessarily prolonging a journey.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
71	Interfering with a taximeter.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(a)	Obstruction of an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(b)	Failure to comply with a requirement of an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)
73(1)(c)	Failure to give information or assistance to an authorised Officer or Constable.	Level 3 (by virtue of s76)

c) Transport Act 1980

Section	Offence	Maximum Penalty
64(2)(a)	Driving a PH vehicle with a roof sign, which contravenes s64 (1).	Level 3
64(2)(b)	Causing or permitting a PH vehicle to be driven with a roof sign, which contravenes s64 (1).	Level 3

APPENDIX L

Taxi Sharing

Blackpool Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10 (4) of the Transport Act 1985 and having obtained the consents and carried out the consultations required by the Taxis (Schemes for Hire at Separate Fares) Regulations 1986, hereby resolve to make the following scheme.

Citation and Commencement

This scheme may be cited as the Blackpool Borough Council (Taxi Hire at Separate Fares) Scheme 1990.

Interpretation

In this scheme, unless the context otherwise requires: -

“the Act” means the Transport Act 1985;

“the Council” means the Blackpool Borough Council;

“taxi” means a vehicle licensed by the Council under Section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847;

“authorised place” has the meaning given by Section 10 (5) of the Act;

“designated area” means the Borough of Blackpool;

“exclusive service” means a service other than at separate fares; and

“shared service” means at separate fares.

Application

Any taxi licensed by the Council to play for hire in the designated area may at the option of the holder of the licence be used for the carriage of passengers at separate fares under the terms of this scheme.

Authorised Places

The places listed in Schedule 1 to this scheme are authorised places at the times and for the journeys indicated in that Schedule.

Signs on Vehicles

There should be displayed on any taxi available for hire under the terms of this scheme at an authorised place (in addition to any other sign, mark or notice which is required to be displayed on the taxi) a notice containing the sign described in Schedule 2 to this scheme.

Fares

The fare payable by each passenger for a journey made under this scheme shall be calculated in accordance with Schedule 3 to this scheme.

The fare table specified in Schedule 4 to this scheme shall be displayed in a manner that is clearly legible to passengers, in any vehicle standing for hire or hired under this scheme.

Operation

A taxi shall be available for hire under this scheme when it is standing at an authorised place and displaying the sign specified in paragraph 5 hereof.

If: -

- a) a person at any time seeks to hire for an exclusive service a taxi available for hire under this scheme; and
- b) the driver and a person seeking a shared service are not waiting for another person to accept the hiring; and
- c) the driver accepts the hiring although not required to do so, then the taxi shall thereupon cease to be available for hire under this scheme until the expiry of that hiring.

If a person seeks to hire for a shared service a taxi available for hire under this scheme and the driver is unable to find at least three other persons to share the hiring within a reasonable time then, no fare shall be payable and, subject to paragraph 9 of this scheme, the driver shall be free to seek an alternative hiring, provided that the driver and that person may continue to wait for another person to offer to share the taxi for so long as they both agree to do so.

Before a taxi has left an authorised place for the purpose of a shared service, any person may decide not to be carried as a passenger by him.

The driver shall not refuse to carry luggage in his taxi provided that the luggage can be accepted safely within the luggage compartment of the taxi having regard to the luggage of other passengers.

The driver shall determine the route taken by the taxi and the order in which passengers are set down, but he shall not unreasonably prolong the journey of any passenger.

SCHEDULE 2: SIGNS ON VEHICLES

The notice referred to in paragraph 5 of the scheme shall be in the following terms: -

“AVAILABLE FOR SHARED HIRE”

The fare to be charged to each person shall be in accordance with the following table: -

SCHEDULE 3: FARES

FARE TABLE FOR SHARED SERVICES

START OF JOURNEY	DESTINATION	FARE (PER PERSON)
Pricebusters	Blackpool Zoo	£1.20
Pricebusters	Stanley Park	£1.20
Blackpool Pleasure Beach	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (immediately south of Adelaide Street)	Blackpool Pleasure Beach	£1.20
Blackpool Zoo	Pricebusters	£1.20
Stanley Park	Pricebusters	£1.20
South Pier	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Waterloo Road)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Alexandra Road)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Woodfield Road)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (St Chad's Road)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Barton Avenue)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Manchester Square)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Foxhall)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Central Pier	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Uncle Tom's Cabin)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20

Promenade (Wilshaw Road)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Gynn Square	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Promenade (Pembroke Hotel)	Blackpool Tower	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	South Pier	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Waterloo Road	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Alexandra Road	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Woodfield Road	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	St Chad's Road	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Barton Avenue	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Manchester Square	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Foxhall	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Central Pier	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Uncle Tom's Cabin	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Wilshaw Road	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Gynn Square	£1.20
Blackpool Tower	Pembroke Hotel	£1.20

