Amendment of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

1.0   Matter for consideration

1.1   The Committee to consider the proposed amendment of section 2.4 of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

2.0   Recommendation(s)

2.1   To approve the amended wording of section 2.4 and to agree an implementation date of 1st September 2008 for the age policy.

2.2   To approve the amended frequency of testing of vehicles (paragraph 2.5.1) to take effect from 1st September 2008.

2.3   To approve revised contents of first aid kit to take effect immediately

3.0   Information

3.1   The Licensing Committee at its meeting on 17th September 2007 approved the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (the Policy) which came into force in November 2007.

3.2   The Policy, at section 2.4 (appendix 4a) introduces an age policy in respect of both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. Following the implementation date, no vehicle over the age of 15 years will be licensed or re-licensed unless the owner can satisfy the exceptional quality policy. This age limit will be reduced by one year annually until a maximum age of 10years is reached.

3.3   It has been accepted, as a result of correspondence with solicitors representing BLTOA (Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association) that the wording of section 2.4 does not set out the rationale behind the age policy as clearly as it could.

3.4   Section 2.4 has now been re-drafted (appendix 4b) and has been subject to a 12 week consultation with members of the trade.

3.5   No comments have been received on the proposed re-wording, although BLTOA have requested that the terms of the age policy be re-visited proposing that the age limit for purpose built vehicles remain at 15years, with the age limit for other vehicles reducing annually until a limit of 10 years has been reached. This proposal will be given consideration and may be brought back to this Committee at a later stage.

3.6   The policy currently prescribes a testing regime for vehicles as follows:
1-3 years old   one test per year
3-5 years old   two tests per year
Over 5 years   three tests per year.

Following representations from the trade, consultation has taken place over a revised schedule of testing. The proposed regime will now be

Up to five years old   one test per year
5-10 years   two tests per year
Over 10 years   three tests per year.

The benefit of adapting such a policy would be that it ties in with the adopted age policy and provides the trade with an incentive to invest in newer vehicles.

The trade supports the proposed amendments.

3.7   Since the policy has been approved, it has been recognised that the contents required in the first aid kit is overly prescriptive. As a minimum the kit must contain:
   - 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
   - 2 sterile eye pads
   - 2 individually wrapped sterile triangular bandages
   - 4 safety pins
   - 6 medium sized (approximately 12cm x 12xcm) individually wrapped sterile wound dressings
   - 2 large (approximately 18cm x 18 cm) individually wrapped sterile wound dressings
   - 1 pair of disposable gloves.

The policy goes on to recognise that the presence of the first aid kit in the vehicle places no obligation on the driver to render first aid to others, and that the kit is primarily for the driver's own benefit.

3.8   It is proposed that the items listed above be deleted from the policy, and that the section on first aid should read – there shall be provided in such a position to be readily available at all times when the vehicle is used for hire, a suitable first aid kit bearing the registered number of the vehicle, containing appropriate items suitable for immediate use in an emergency.

4.0   Financial considerations

4.1   None

5.0   Legal considerations

5.1   None

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Appendices attached:
Appendix 4a: Existing wording of section 2.4
Appendix 4b: Proposed wording of section 2.4

Background papers:
None

Websites and e-mail links for further information:
None

Glossary:
None