

Public Document Pack

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Date: Monday, 1 March 2021

****Virtual Meeting**

Dear Sir or Madam

The Licensing Committee – Tuesday, 9 March 2021, 10.00 am – Virtual meeting via Teams

A meeting of the Licensing Committee will take place as indicated above. Councillors will be sent a Teams Meeting invitation to place the meeting in their Calendar and can then access the meeting from the link in that calendar item.

Please Note that any member of the press and public may listen in to proceedings at this 'virtual' meeting via the weblink below –

<https://youtu.be/5yMbELe3nxg>

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours faithfully

Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Committee

Councillors: Robert Payne (Chairman), Caroline Cherry, James Clayton, Andy Cole, John Crockford-Hawley, Hugh Gregor, Ann Harley, Nicola Holland, Stuart McQuillan, Ian Parker, Marcia Pepperall, Mike Solomon, James Tonkin and Roz Willis.

This document and associated papers can be made available in a different format on request.

Agenda

1. **Public Participation (Standing Order 17 as amended by SO 5A)**

To receive written submissions from any person who wishes to address the Committee. The Chairman will select the order of the matters to be received.

Please ensure that any submissions meet the required time limits and can be read out in five minutes (up to a maximum of 30 minutes).

Requests and full statements must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer, or to the officer mentioned at the top of this agenda letter, by noon on the day before the meeting and the request must detail the subject matter of the address.

2. **Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes**

3. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37 as amended by SO 7A)**

A Member must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest where it relates to any matter being considered at the meeting. A declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest should indicate the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. A Member is not permitted to participate in this agenda item by law and should immediately leave the meeting before the start of any debate.

If the Member leaves the meeting in respect of a declaration, he or she should ensure that the Chairman is aware of this before he or she leaves to enable their exit from the meeting to be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Standing Order 37.

4. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)**

03 November 2020, to approve as a correct record (attached)

5. **Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other committee etc. (if any)**

6. **End of year report for the administration and enforcement of all licensing regimes (Pages 9 - 130)**

Report of the Director of Public Health.

7. **Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972**

For a matter to be considered as an urgent item, the following question must be addressed: "What harm to the public interest would flow from leaving it until the next meeting". If harm can be demonstrated, then it is open to the Chairman to rule that it be considered as urgent. Otherwise the matter cannot be considered urgent within the statutory provisions.

Exempt Items

Should the Licensing Committee wish to consider a matter as an Exempt Item, the following resolution should be passed -

“(1) That the press, public, and officers not required by the Members, the Chief Executive or the Director, to remain during the exempt session, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that its consideration will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.”

Also, if appropriate, the following resolution should be passed –

“(2) That members of the Council who are not members of the Licensing Committee be invited to remain.”

Mobile phones and other mobile devices

All persons attending the meeting are requested to ensure that these devices are switched to silent mode. The chairman may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances.

Filming and recording of meetings

The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting purposes.

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman.

Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

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Draft Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 3rd November 2020

held via Microsoft Teams.

Meeting Commenced: 10:00 Meeting Concluded: 10:49

Councillors:

P Mike Solomon (Chairman)

A James Clayton

P Andy Cole

P John Crockford-Hawley

A Ann Harley

P Marcia Pepperall (joined after attendance roll call)

P James Tonkin

A Roz Willis

P Huw James (substitution for Caroline Cherry)

A Hugh Gregor

P Nicola Holland

P Ian Parker

P Robert Payne

P Stuart McQuillan

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Sioux Isherwood (Public Health and Regulatory Services Directorate), Amanda Hodge (Public Health and Regulatory Services Directorate), Caz Horton (Public Health and Regulatory Services Directorate), Kellie Trego (Public Health and Regulatory Services Directorate), Sara Saunders (Corporate Services), Mike Riggall (Corporate Services), Hazel Brinton (Corporate Services)

LIC Chairman's Welcome

10 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the Licensing Committee and recorded his resignation as Chairman from the Committee.

LIC Election of Chairman of the Licensing Committee

11 Resolved: that Councillor Robert Payne be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020-21.

LIC Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

12 (Agenda Item 3)

None

LIC Minutes 05 November 2019 (Agenda Item 4)

13 Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

LIC Mid Year Report on the administration and enforcement of all licensing regimes (Agenda Item 6)
14

The Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services reported on the administration and enforcement of all licensing regimes undertaken by the council.

The Principal Environmental Protection and Licensing Officer presented her report, which detailed the Licensing activities undertaken within the financial year 2020/21 in relation to the functions and responsibilities carried out by the North Somerset Licensing Team. The report noted additional pressures due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report further noted that the Statement of Licensing Policy was due for review, but a six-month grace period had been granted by the Home Office due to Covid-19. The Principal Environmental Protection and Licensing Officer highlighted areas already identified for review to members and requested that members consider any additional areas of concern. She noted that the Sexual Entertainment Venues policy required reviewing as did the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy which required significant amendments as a result of new statutory standards for Local Authorities issued by the Department of Transport. She would advise members further if statutory consultation was required on the amended Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy. She noted that licenses currently issued would be reviewed against the new policy and any individual license reviews brought back to members as necessary. She highlighted that nationally applicable legislation introduced by the government as a result of Covid-19 had overridden local policy and gave the example of street cafes which had been successful but had resulted in costs to council in terms of impact on income.

She answered members' queries on the impact on the Licensing team's resources of the statutory changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy; the council's "three strikes and out" policy; social distancing enforcement at licensed premises under Covid-19 regulations; electric vehicles for future licensed taxis; county lines exploitation and publicity around personal responsibility of individuals in respect of social distancing during the pandemic.

Resolved:

- (1) that the outcomes and administration of the various Licensing Regimes undertaken by the North Somerset Licensing Team be noted;
- (2) that the updates regarding the Licensing Service provision and policy be noted and
- (3) that the changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Policy in light of statutory guidance be noted.

Chairman

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North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 9 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT OF REPORT: END OF YEAR REPORT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF ALL LICENSING REGIMES

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL AREAS

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are invited to note some of the outcomes and challenges to the administration of Licensing regimes undertaken by the North Somerset Council Licensing Team this financial year, and to note the requirement to review and consult on several of the statutory policies in place.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides a summary of some of the main activities carried out by the Licensing Team within the financial year 2020/2021 and also highlights the ongoing pressures and difficulties experienced as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. POLICY

2.1 Statutory and Local policies have been agreed by the Council as follows:

- Licensing Act 2003 –statement of Licensing Policy (2015-2020)
- Sex Establishment Policy
- Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policy (2019-2023)
- Gambling Act 2005 – statement of principles (2019-2021)
- Street Café Policy (2020-2024)
- Street Trading Policy (2020-2024)
- Film Classification Policy (2020)

These policies direct the Licensing Authority in the discharge of its responsibilities under the legislation it administers and enforces.

Licensing Act 2003

2.2 The current Statement of Licensing Policy (Licensing Act 2003) is now due for review, with Home Office guidance permitting a delay in starting the formal consultation in light of the resource pressures caused by the pandemic.

It is clear that the emerging picture of the night time economy, and the future hospitality industry in general, will take sometime to recover following the extended periods of lockdown and restrictions that many businesses have faced.

As the current policy is still fit for purpose, using the available resource to support the current premises back to operation and compliance is seen as a priority and will also allow time to take a more aspirational approach to any revised content.

It is proposed that the next few months are used to collate ideas and data to inform a revised version which will be presented to the Committee at the mid-year review in November.

Sexual Entertainment Venues

- 2.3 With the continued resource pressures during the present Coronavirus pandemic the revised Sexual entertainment venue policy is still in formulation. There is currently only one sexual entertainment venue in the district which has remained closed since March 2020 and no new applications have been submitted to date. The revision of this policy is therefore seen as low priority currently and will now take place in early 2022.

Taxi & Private Hire

- 2.4 The Department for Transport statutory standards for Local Authorities were issued last year in relation to the Hackney and Private Hire licensing regimes. Details of the new standards were outlined to members at the last meeting in November 2020.

Whilst it was reassuring to note that many of the proposed standards were already being met within the current policy, additional measures need be introduced and an interim revision of the policy to note these ahead of the next full policy review in 2023.

- 2.5 A copy of the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Standards will be attached as a separate document marked **Appendix A** but can also be accessed online [here](#).
- 2.6 An interim revision of the Council's Taxi & Private Hire policy has been drafted accordingly and is shown at **Appendix B** of this report. The revisions are noted in red, and are additions rather than amendments.

3. DETAILS – A SERVICE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Licensing Team have continued to receive an unprecedented demand on resource in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The constant changes in regulations and guidance, often with little notice of the detail, has resulted in officers having to interpret, advise and enforce this alongside maintaining the “business as usual” statutory service.

- 3.2 Licensing Officers have continued to carry out reactive premises visits, often with the Police. Officers have used education and encouragement before enforcement which has seen a high level of compliance achieved.

The strong working relationships with partners such as the Police, Fire service and internal departments such as Food Safety, Trading Standards, Community Safety

and Environmental Protection have enabled stretched resources to be best assigned and support between all the agencies is noted as a real achievement.

- 3.3 There are also many licenced premises who are unlikely to open again once the restrictions lift with many licences suspended through either non-payment or simply the closure of the premise.

This again will of course have an impact on the collection of licence fees; these are centrally set statutory fees and as such any shortfall in their recovery will see the Local Authority unable to recover the full costs of administering the regimes.

Equally important will be the overall effect on the offer, look and feel of the hospitality in the district. We will continue to work with businesses and local forums to try and support new operators and ventures accordingly.

- 3.4 Supply of grant funding to the taxi trade has been extremely successful and very well received. Trade is still noted as well below normal levels and this support has enabled licence renewals and vehicle maintenance to continue. With the opening of all schools, the home to school transport requirements will resume and greatly assist in the resumption of normal operation for the trade.

Since the beginning of 2020 and through the restricted periods we have seen a marked decrease in the number of licensed drivers. Many have chosen not to work and will not return to full duties until the end of the restrictions or after full vaccination. However, with the fall in required journeys there has not been any unmet demand noted, nor occasions where Council tendered contracts have not been fulfilled.

We are now accepting new applications for drivers and Operators. Officers have worked extremely hard to revamp the application process to accommodate online training and assessments without compromising on the entry level requirements demanded to ensure public safety. Several new Operators have approached us to start the licensing process and we are working hard to accommodate these and to get their business up and running locally.

- 3.5 Since the last report in November, the whole team have continued to be faced with unprecedented demand on resource. Two vacant positions have been successfully filled allowing for the creation of a taxi compliance officer. This will provide us with a fantastic opportunity to support the trade back to normal operation but will also enable more programmed and reactive compliance inspections to be carried out to further improve the standards and promote public safety.
- 3.6 Officers have continued to work long hours, have delayed leave and still provided a professional service within all the statutory timelines. This is testament to their commitment to their colleagues, their customers and their consideration of the Authority's reputation.

4. CONSULTATION

There have been no public consultations since the last report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Authority continues to use suspension powers for non-payment of fees. Recovery of outstanding fees is vital to ensuring maximum cost recovery for the provision of the Licensing service.

However, in the current climate, many businesses are acknowledged to be experiencing financial difficulties and arrangements are being made where possible to permit extensions to fee dates and the introduction of payment instalment plans. This has again been welcomed by licence holders but has added a significant level of administration for officers.

Costs

- 5.2 Costs for the administration of licensing regimes, monitoring of compliance of permissions and the policies that accompany them are off-set against the fees charged to applicants. The cost associated with delivering each licence regime is regularly reviewed to ensure full cost recovery and correct construction of levied fees.

It should be noted that there will be a financial risk to the Authority in this and the next financial year due to the additional costs incurred through the period of the pandemic, and possible under-recovery of fees. This will no doubt need further review as the restrictions are gradually lifted and the full impact of Coronavirus on the local economy becomes known.

Funding

- 5.3 The team continues to review the costs of each licensing regime to ensure the appropriate fees are levied to maximise cost recovery for the Local Authority. As previously noted, the introduction of some statutory “capping” of fees will result in a financial loss in fee income. Other cost saving measures will be looked at to negate this where possible.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Licensing Authority recognises that its licensing function is only one means of securing the delivery of the service. The Licensing Authority will therefore continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders, such as the Police, Crime & Disorder Partnerships and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) towards the promotion of any licensing objectives.
- 6.2 In undertaking its licensing function, the Licensing Authority has regard to various primary legislation and statutory guidance issued alongside.
- 6.3 The Licensing Authority also has regard to any other relevant legislation, strategies, policies and guidance in its decision-making. New legislation and regulations authorising officers to enforce a wide range of COVID-19 restrictions have been laid as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic including:

- Coronavirus Act 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) regulations
- Business and Planning Act 2020

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no climate change or environmental implications identified within this report.

However, there is also a strong commitment to addressing climate emergency and reviews of admissible vehicle type and age will form part of future reviews. There is an aspiration to move to lower emission vehicles and to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Regularly reviewing licensing policies and practices reduces the risk to the Authority.
- 8.2 Using a risk-rated approach to both proactive and reactive enforcement allows the team to focus resources in problem areas, promoting public safety.
- 8.3 Ensuring MoU agreements are in place with external partner agencies also help to strengthen roles and responsibilities surrounding Licensing work.
- 8.4 Being able to enforce COVID-safe working practices provides an opportunity to ensure compliance and also serves to mitigate some of the Public Health risks associated with the spread of Coronavirus.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality issues identified as part of this report.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

No corporate implications noted as part of this report.

11. OPTIONS

Members are asked to :

- Note the updates regarding the Licensing Service provision and policy updates,
- Note the changes to the Taxi & Private Hire Policy in light of statutory Guidance.
- Agree to formulate a revised Licensing Act statement of policy, (informed by local issues as restrictions ease) with a view to a draft policy being agreed at the next Licensing Committee hearing.

AUTHOR

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A (Separate document) - Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards, (Department for Transport July 2020)

APPENDIX B – Taxi & Private Hire Policy 2021-2023 (updated draft 2021)

BACKGROUND PAPERS - None



**HACKNEY CARRIAGE
AND PRIVATE HIRE
Licensing
Policy**

(Draft March 2021)

2021 - 2023

North Somerset Council, Licensing Team, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove
Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ
Tel: 01934 426 800

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INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Licensing Authority Area

North Somerset Council (the Council) is a Unitary Authority in Somerset covering approximately 145 square miles with a population of almost 205,000.

There are approximately 88,000 households and 7,000 active business enterprises within the district. The Council area is a mixed urban and rural district with a dispersed population. The main urban areas are Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead.

The remainder of the area is a mixture of villages and farmland. The estimated population of Weston-super-Mare is 80,000, Clevedon 22,000, Nailsea 18,000 and Portishead 22,000. The area is not densely populated although there are concentrations of housing in the above towns.

The area adjoins the conurbation of Bristol and includes a major dock at Portbury, an International Airport at Lulsgate and the seaside resorts of Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. The area has good transportation links that include the M5 motorway and main line railway routes and stations.

Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles are an important mode of local transport and as such have a specific role to play in an integrated transport system. They can provide safe, secure and comfortable transport, providing an on-request door-to-door service in various circumstances, including where public transport may not be available (e.g. in more rural areas), or for older or disabled people.

The area is served by around 500 Private Hire drivers and Private Hire vehicles, working for around 70 Operators. There are also around 120 Hackney drivers and 100 Hackney vehicles.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of the Policy is to regulate the provision of a robust Hackney and Private Hire licensing regime, which ensures that the public travel safely, receive a good level of service but where Operators and drivers are not overly burdened by unnecessary conditions.

In setting out its Policy, the Licensing Authority seeks to promote the following:

- The safety and health of both the drivers and the public;
- Vehicle safety, access and comfort;
- To protect the public;
- To prevent crime and disorder.

Public safety is paramount, and North Somerset Licensing Authority seeks to make sure that all Hackney and Private Hire vehicles are safe and fit for purpose, and that their drivers and operators are fit and proper persons.

This Policy will aim to provide information and guidance to licence applicants, clarity for owners of licensed vehicles and operators, and to inform the public as to the way the Authority will undertake its licensing functions.

In addition, this Policy document seeks to assist the Licensing Authority in reaching decisions on applications or regarding an enforcement issue, setting out those matters that will normally be taken into account.

All individuals that determine whether a licence is issued will be required to undertake sufficient training. As a minimum, training for a member of a licensing committee will include: licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of exploitation, disability and equality awareness and the making of difficult and potentially controversial decisions.

All training will be formally recorded by the Licensing Authority with acknowledgment recorded from participants.

The Policy will be formally revised every 3 years, but kept under review to consider any changes in legislation and best practice, information collated over a period of time, together with the outcomes of any updates in legislation or associated government guidance.

There is also a strong commitment to addressing climate emergency and reviews of admissible vehicle type and age will form part of future reviews. There is an aspiration to move to lower emission vehicles and to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements.

The Policy and any supporting appendices to the Policy may be updated from time to time between full Policy reviews and applicants and other interested parties are advised to contact the Licensing Authority for the most up-to-date information.

In preparing and publication of this Policy the Licensing Authority has had regard to:

- Guidance issued by the Department for Transport “Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best practice guidance” – edition March 2010;
- Department For Transport “Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards” – edition July 2020;
- Relevant Legislation;
- Consultation and discussions with other Local Authorities and Partner Agencies;
- Consultation with the taxi trade;
- Consultation with Disability and Equalities representatives.

Nothing in this Policy document should be regarded or interpreted as an indication that any requirement of licensing or other law may be overridden.

1. Policy overview and objectives

- 1.1 North Somerset Council is the Licensing Authority under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 (as amended) and the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847. It has the duty to carry out its licensing functions in respect of:
- Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences
 - Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences
 - Private Hire Vehicle Licences
 - Private Hire Drivers Licences
 - Private Hire Operator Licences
- 1.2 It is recognised that other legislation exists which may impact on taxi licensing, such as the Equalities Act 2010, and therefore aspects of the Policy pay regard to these legislative requirements.
- 1.3 This Policy takes effect from.....TBC
- 1.4 The Council will keep this Policy under constant review and make such revisions to it as it considers appropriate. The Policy will be formally reviewed every three years and informally re-evaluated from time to time. Where revisions are made the Council will publish a statement of such revisions or a revised Policy document.
- 1.5 Any changes in legislation will supersede this Policy.
- 1.6 The Licensing Authority is committed to ensuring the provision of a professional Hackney Carriage and Private Hire service, by continued monitoring and improvement of standards and procedures. The Licensing Authority also seeks to promote the following objectives when considering applications, or when assessing the continuance of an existing licence:
- To ensure the safety and health of both the drivers and the public;
 - To ensure vehicle safety, access and comfort;
 - To protect the public;
 - To prevent crime and disorder.
- 1.7 In promoting these objectives, considerations such as those set out below at Paragraphs **1.8** to **1.11** of the Policy will be taken into account by the Licensing Authority, and applicants and licence holders will be expected to continuously demonstrate that they can meet or exceed specifications set by the Licensing Authority.
- 1.8 **Safety and Health of Drivers and the Public:**
- Consideration of any convictions and/or cautions;
 - Driver training, qualification and performance;
 - Health and fitness of applicant for driver licence, or existing licence holder;
 - Regular driver health checks;
 - Vehicle specifications;
 - Knowledge of the geographical area of North Somerset.
- 1.9 **Vehicle Safety, Comfort and Access:**
- Standards of vehicle appearance and comfort;

- Use and location of ranks;
- Provision of accessible facilities;
- Provision for all age groups;
- Provision of safe, comfortable and accessible premises for customers to use, if applicable.

1.10 **To Protect the Public:**

- Vetting, qualification,
- Training and monitoring of licence holders;
- Measures to prevent noise and light nuisance from taxi activities;

1.11 **To Prevent Crime and Disorder:**

- Operating rules and disciplinary processes;
- Commitment to work with Licensing Authority, Police and other statutory authorities.

1.12 The Licensing Authority is aware that applying licensing requirements which are unduly stringent may unreasonably restrict the supply of taxi and Private Hire services, and can lead to negative safety implications. Therefore, the Licensing Authority has considered each of its licensing requirements in relation to the proportion of risk it aims to address.

1.13 The Licensing Authority recognises that its licensing function is only one means of securing the delivery of the Policy. The Licensing Authority will therefore continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders, such as the Police, Crime & Disorder Partnerships and the Vehicle and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) towards the promotion of the objectives of this Policy.

1.14 In undertaking its licensing function, the Licensing Authority will have regard to the following legislation:

- Town and Police Clauses Act 1847
- Transport Act 1980 & 1985
- Road Traffic Acts The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Health Act 2006
- The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations
- The Smoke-free (Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007
- The Equality Act 2010
- The European Convention on Human Rights, which is applied by the Human Rights Act 1998
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002

1.15 The Licensing Authority will also have regard to any other relevant legislation, strategies, policies and guidance in its decision-making.

1.16 The following principles will be adhered to when carrying out enforcement activities:

- **Openness**

The Council will be open about how it enforces the legislation in relation to

Hackney & Private Hire licensing. It will consult with interested parties and ensure that officers discuss compliance failures or problems with persons experiencing difficulties.

- **Helpfulness**

The Council will work with people to advise on and assist with compliance of the relevant legislation. It will also strive to provide a courteous and efficient service to its customers.

- **Proportionality**

The Council will minimise the cost of compliance for businesses and individuals by ensuring that any action taken is proportionate to the risk or wider public benefit. Officers shall have regard to the human rights of all parties involved in its enforcement activities.

- **Consistency**

The Council will carry out its duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. Officers will have regard to national legislation and guidance; local byelaws; corporate policies and procedures: the contents of this document.

1.17 Where there are concerns that policies are not being applied correctly, it is vital that these can be raised, investigated and remedial action taken if required. The Licensing authority will have effective internal procedures in place for staff to raise concerns and for any concerns to be dealt with openly and fairly.

The Local authority will ensure there is an effective 'whistleblowing' policy and that all staff are aware of it.

2. Consultation

2.1 Before determining this Policy, the Licensing Authority will consult with the following:

- Representatives of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade within the North Somerset area;
- Taxi trade representatives;
- Department for Transport (including DVSA)
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary;
- North Somerset Council Highways & Transport services, Community Safety Team, Schools transport Team, Safeguarding Team and Equality and Diversity Officer.

2.2 Consultees are permitted to make representations in writing or via electronic means e.g. email response, so long as their identity and capacity in which they are making representation can be understood. Proper weight will be given to the views of all consulted prior to this Policy taking effect.

3. Departure from Policy

3.1 In exercising its discretion in carrying out its functions, the Licensing Authority will have regard to this Policy and the objectives set out therein.

- 3.2 Where it is necessary for the Licensing Authority to depart significantly from this Policy, clear and substantive reasons for doing so will be given.
- 3.3 Any changes in licensing requirements should be followed by a review of the licences already issued. If the need to change licensing requirements has been identified, this same need is applicable to those already in possession of a licence. That is not however to suggest that licences should be automatically revoked overnight, a pragmatic approach should be taken to changes and where possible a reasonable time should be allowed for these to be accommodated. The implementation schedule of any changes that affect current licence holders must be transparent and communicated promptly and clearly.
- 3.4 Where a more subjective change has been introduced, for example an amended policy on previous convictions, the licensing authority must consider each case on its own merits. Where there are exceptional, clear and compelling reasons to deviate from a policy, licensing authorities should consider doing so. Licensing authorities should record the reasons for any deviation from the policies in place.

4. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

- 4.1. The Licensing Authority has no limitation Policy for the number of Hackney Carriages which may be licensed within the North Somerset Council area. This does not imply that there is to be no regulation of Hackney Carriages, as the Licensing Authority intends that quality controls shall be rigorously maintained in relation to both vehicles and drivers.
- 4.2 This Licensing authority will require applicants for vehicle licences to undertake a basic disclosure from the DBS and ensure that a check is undertaken annually. Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC).
- Consideration will be given to whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in Appendix L to this document, other than those relating to driving, meet the 'fit and proper' threshold.
- If an individual holds a valid Taxi or Private Hire driver licence with North Somerset Council and the DBS twice-yearly checks are up to date and acceptable then no additional check will need to be provided should they apply for a vehicle licence.
- 4.3 A refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold a vehicle licence; these decisions will be made independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check.
- 4.4 Before North Somerset Council will consider licensing a vehicle for the first time it must meet the vehicle specification set out in **Appendix A**.

4.5 The Licensing Authority will not grant first time vehicle licences for vehicles older than **8** years from the date of first registration of the vehicle. This provision will not apply to non-motorised vehicles and special categories of vehicles detailed at **Appendix A**.

4.6 Conditions will be applied to vehicle licences granted by North Somerset Council. The agreed standard conditions are shown at the following appendices:

Appendix B – Hackney Carriages

Appendix C – Private Hire vehicles

Appendix D – Conditions applicable to horse drawn vehicles

Appendix E – Additional conditions for stretched limousines

Appendix J – Conditions applicable to Non-Motorised Vehicles

4.7 A licensed vehicle shall be tested once per year until it is **8** years old. This will consist of a full MOT and a compliance check at the Council's nominated testing facility.

A vehicle older than **8** years of age shall be licensed for six months. The testing will consist of a full MOT test and a vehicle compliance check at the Council's nominated testing facility.

4.8 All annual vehicle compliance tests will take place at a facility approved by North Somerset Council, and will be conducted against the vehicle inspection manual, which is a separate document supplementing this Policy.

4.9 All vehicles must have a current MOT at the time of licensing, undertaken within **1 month** of application.

4.8. Detailed provisions as to permitted vehicle markings which relate to the proprietor's business and commercial advertising on licensed vehicles is shown at **Appendix F**.

4.10 The Council has made byelaws in relation to Hackney Carriages and these are shown at **Appendix G**.

4.11 In relation to Hackney Carriages the Council requires all vehicles to be fitted with calendar controlled taximeters. These meters must be calendar clocked, accurate and displaying the correct time and capable of displaying the various tariffs, as approved by the Licensing Authority. This will include any extra charges which are payable under the approved Table of Fares.

4.12 Dual plating of North Somerset licensed vehicles with other council areas will not be allowed. If a North Somerset licensed vehicle is found to be licensed by another Authority, the North Somerset licence will be revoked.

4.13 Vehicles that fall into category A or B insurance losses will not be licensed other than in exceptional circumstances. No vehicle will be licensed as either a Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire vehicle where a condition report indicates that the vehicle has been previously classified as a category S or N insurance loss, unless a Motor Vehicle Repairers' Association (MVRA) inspector indicates that the vehicle is safe to be licensed. The cost of the MVRA inspection report and any subsequent re-assessment must be met by the applicant. The Council and their agents may conduct their own checks on vehicles and bear the cost of the same.

- 4.14 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences will be issued for a period of one year.
- 4.15 Applications for the continuation of a vehicle licence must be accompanied by a full V5 document. The registered keeper name must reflect the name of the licence applicant.
- 4.16 Vehicles must be presented at the Council's appointed testing facility for the required compliance test within one month of submitting the application for the grant or continuation of a vehicle licence. Failure to do so may prevent the vehicle from being licensed.
- 4.17 Vehicles used solely for Weddings and Funerals are exempt from these Licensing regimes; as are volunteer drivers who receive no financial gain. Ambulances and medical transport vehicles are also currently exempt.
- 4.18 The Licensing Authority takes the view that vehicles which are used as "courtesy cars", i.e. for transporting customers to and from garages, airports, hotels and night-clubs without charge, but with an obvious business benefit, are likely to need to be licensed under the Private Hire licensing scheme as should their 'operator'. Whilst there may not be a separate charge for using the vehicles, they are being supplied with a driver for a specific purpose which is likely to result in a 'business benefit', for example a customer using that business as opposed to one that doesn't offer the same transport service.
- 4.19 Application will be considered for the dispensation from the requirement to display plates on a Private Hire vehicle. These will not be issued as a matter of course and each application will be considered on its own merits. The overriding consideration is for public safety – the clear identification of a licensed vehicle is considered a safety aspect, particularly when visiting such places as Airports and the centres of large towns.

In determining such an application, the status of the passenger and the executive nature of the work is likely to indicate whether a dispensation will be granted or not.

The Licensing Authority requirements in relation to dispensation from displaying plates are shown at **APPENDIX H**.

- 4.20 CCTV in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles may be of benefit. In addition to passenger safety, the safety of vehicle drivers is a key issue for both the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade. Lone female passengers can be vulnerable especially late at night. Female drivers may be more likely to seek employment with proprietors who have CCTV installed in their vehicles.

Installation of CCTV cameras may have a positive impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. It provides an additional tool for the identification of persons travelling in a Private Hire / Hackney Carriage vehicle. This would be beneficial to passengers, drivers and the police.

It is not proposed to make the provision of CCTV cameras in vehicles a requirement of the licensing scheme, as it is considered that it is a matter best left to the judgement of the owners and drivers themselves. The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle trades are however encouraged to consider

the installation of CCTV cameras in their vehicles on a voluntary basis and it will then be incumbent upon the operator to handle relevant data gathered in an appropriate and secure manner. Systems having an encrypted recorder that only the police can access are recommended. Should a CCTV system be installed in a licensed Hackney or Private Hire vehicle, the Licensing Authority requirements are shown at **Appendix I**.

- 4.21 North Somerset Licensing Authority will not entertain applications for those wishing to operate Tuk-Tuks or similar vehicles.
- 4.22 The Licensing Authority will accept applications from any person wishing to operate a non-motorised vehicle (for example a pedicab or rickshaw) for Hire and reward. Persons wishing to operate such a vehicle will be required to apply for a Hackney Carriage drivers licence. Non-motorised vehicles may not be licensed as Private Hire vehicles as the legislation defines Private Hire as a “motor vehicle”.

The requirements for licensing such vehicles are shown at **Appendix J**.

5. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licences

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement that drivers of either Hackney Carriages or Private Hire vehicles obtain from the Licensing Authority a licence to drive such vehicles.
- 5.2 North Somerset Council Licensing Authority issues both Private Hire Driver Licences and Combined Hackney & Private Hire Driver Licences. These are issued for a period of 3 years but can be issued for one year where the applicant is aged 65 years or more and may consider retirement in less than the 3 years of issue.
- 5.3 The Licensing Authority will issue a licence to an applicant provided that the applicant has held an EEA (E.G.) European Union (EU) full driving licence for at least 12 months, and is a “fit and proper” person to hold such a licence. The Licensing Authority acknowledges that changes to International Driving licences may occur as Great Britain leaves the European Union and will accept any legally agreed version at that time; held for more than one year.

5.4 Fit and proper test

Licensing authorities have a duty to ensure that any person to whom they grant a taxi or private hire vehicle driver's licence is a 'fit and proper' person to be a licensee. It may be helpful when considering whether an applicant or licensee is fit and proper to pose oneself the following question:

“Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you allow a person for whom you care, regardless of their condition, to travel alone in a vehicle driven by this person at any time of day or night?”

If, on the balance of probabilities, the answer to the question is ‘no’, the individual should not hold a licence.

The safeguarding of the public is paramount. All decisions on the suitability of an applicant or licensee should be made on the balance of probability.

This means that an applicant or licensee should not be ‘given the benefit of doubt’. If the committee or delegated officer is only “50/50” as to whether the applicant or licensee is ‘fit and proper’, they should not hold a licence. The threshold used here is lower than for a criminal conviction (that being beyond

reasonable doubt) and can take into consideration conduct that has not resulted in a criminal conviction.

- 5.5 Conditions will be applied to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences granted by North Somerset Council. The agreed standard conditions are shown at **Appendix K**.
- 5.6 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licence holders will be required to adhere to the Code of Good Conduct which is shown at **Appendix M**

Age and Experience

- 5.7 The Licensing Authority will not have regard to the age of an applicant when determining their suitability where it can be shown that:
- The applicant holds a valid full driving licence and that this licence must have been held for no less than 12 months at the time of application.
 - The applicant has reached the required medical standards entitling them to drive in the United Kingdom.
- 5.8 Drivers reaching the age of 65 will be required to undertake a full Group 2 standard medical examination (as detailed in paragraphs 5.13 – 5.23) on an annual basis for the remainder of time they are licensed with the Authority. They will then be permitted to apply for one-year licences until the point of retirement.

Driver Knowledge and proficiency

- 5.9 All new applicants will be required to undertake a suitability test before being permitted to apply for a licence. There **may be** a published fee for this test which will consist of basic numeracy, literacy and map reading assessments. These may be written, oral or computer based and will be individual tests although the test may be in a group examination setting with an invigilator.

Applicants will only be permitted to repeat the test on up to three occasions. If the accepted pass mark is not reached on a third attempt an application will not be entertained.

- 5.10 A lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents, such as policies and guidance, relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and applying this to identify and act on signs of exploitation. Oral proficiency will be of relevance in the identification of potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interaction with others.

North Somerset Council will test a driver's proficiency in both oral and written English language skills to achieve the objectives stated above.

- 5.11 Licensed drivers require a good working knowledge of the geographical area in which they operate to meet reasonable customer expectations. The Licensing Authority acknowledges that advances in technology have seen the development of both hand-held and in-car satellite navigation systems but still require all drivers to be able to navigate around the district in case of their failure.

The Authority, to determine the fitness of an applicant to hold a driver licence,

requires that applicants undertake a knowledge test which examines their knowledge of both local geography and knowledge of the Highway Code, By-laws, Driver Code of Conduct and the conditions attached to their licence. This test is carried out at a place and time determined by the Licensing Authority and pre-test learning guidance will be provided.

An applicant is able to undertake additional tests if they do not pass on their initial attempt. However, if an applicant fails five attempts the Licensing Authority will not then continue with an application.

5.12 Licensed drivers, as a profession, have a responsibility for the safe transportation of fare-paying passengers. Therefore, the Licensing Authority as part of its application procedure requires a Driving Standard Assessment of the drivers' ability to be obtained by all new applicants.

5.13 The driving assessment is achieved by successful completion of the appropriate Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Practical Driving Test. The test is reflective of modern driving practices; the standard is set at a level suitable for the full driving licence holder, which is therefore of a higher level than the learner driver test.

The test must be carried out by the Licensing Authority's nominated test provider. Details of the current provider will be provided to applicants who will then be responsible for arranging and attending a test; providing a copy of their certificate as part of the application process. A fee is payable to the provider and the Licensing Authority does not set or influence this fee level.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable persons

5.14 All drivers will be required to attend a training session on safeguarding children and vulnerable persons. The training session will cover the conduct and responsibilities of those licensed. It will provide guidance in identifying when vulnerable people need protection and how to ensure they are taken to a place of safety. **The training deals with the identification of County Lines activities and the signs of child exploitation associated with it.** It also details the need to report immediately any such incident or occurrence to the police and/or social services, and provides the necessary contacts and procedures to be followed.

The training provider must be approved by the Licensing Authority and may be an internal or external provider.

New and renewing applicants will be required to attend safeguarding training prior to applying.

5.15 North Somerset Council has a Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA). All complaints and safeguarding concerns raised against licensed taxi or Private Hire drivers will be referred to this officer. An allegations meeting may be held with representatives of relevant Authorities such as (but not limited to) the Police, Adult/Child protection and social care teams, school transport etc.

In the interest of public safety and to safeguard vulnerable persons, any driver subject to such an enquiry should expect his/her taxi or Private Hire driver licence suspended during any period of investigation.

Should any complaint or concern be upheld following this process, more formal action to revoke a licence may follow. Similarly, if there are no allegations to answer then the licence may be reinstated.

Medical Examination and Exemptions

- 5.16 The Licensing Authority requires that all drivers complete a medical examination at the application stage; and for existing drivers during the term of the licence, as set out in Para 5.14 below. The medical examination will ensure that the applicant/licensed driver satisfy all the requirements of the DVLA Group II Medical Standards of fitness to drive.
- 5.17 The requirement for applicants/licensed drivers about to medical examination is as follows:
- Upon application Every 5 years between the ages of 45 and 65
 - Every year at renewal where the driver is aged 65 years or over
 - Or anytime as required by the Council or the medical practitioner.
- 5.18 Where there is any doubt as to the medical fitness of the applicant/licenced driver, the Licensing Authority may require the applicant/licensed driver to undergo a further medical examination by a Doctor appointed by the Licensing Authority at the applicant's/licensed driver's own expense.
- 5.19 Where there remains any doubt about the medical fitness of the applicant/licensed driver, following the additional assessment described at Para 5.15 above, the Licensing Authority will not issue a licence to drive a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle. Existing licences will not be renewed and may be revoked.
- 5.20 All licensed drivers are required to inform the Licensing Authority immediately of any illness, condition or any other matter that affects their ability to drive.
- 5.21 The Licensing Authority recognises that applicants who have HGV/PSV entitlements on their DVLA driving licences already undergo Group 2 standard medicals with the same regularity required by this Policy. To avoid unnecessary cost and inconvenience, a separate medical examination will not be requested.
- 5.22 Exemption from carrying guide, hearing and certain other assistance dogs which accompany disabled persons, can only be sought on medical grounds. Therefore, applicants will need to demonstrate the grounds for applying this exemption by providing medical evidence to the Licensing Authority.
- 5.23 An application for the exemption described in Para 5.18 above must be made prior to undertaking a medical examination.
- 5.24 If an application for exemption notice is successful, the Licensing Authority will issue to the driver a Notice of Exemption. This Exemption must be exhibited in the vehicle at all times, by fixing it in a prominent position on the vehicle dashboard.
- 5.25 Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010 places duties on a licensed driver if driving a designated wheelchair accessible Hackney or Private Hire vehicle. These duties may include conveying a passenger in their own wheelchair, transferring

a passenger into a seat and transporting their wheelchair; and providing mobility assistance as required. Some drivers may have a medical condition or physical condition which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to provide the sort of physical assistance which these duties require.

An application for exemption from the duties required under Section 165 will require medical evidence from an applicant's own GP and will require an exemption notice to be exhibited in the vehicle at all times, by fixing it in a prominent position on the vehicle dashboard. Should the passenger be visually impaired the driver must provide suitable contact details for the passenger to be able to independently verify this information.

North Somerset Council publishes a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles, their drivers and Operator if known, and licensed Taxi and Private Hire drivers should expect their details to be published (including confirmation of any exemptions) accordingly.

- 5.26 Any applicant for the grant of licence that is unable to satisfy the Licensing Authority that they meet the required medical standard will not have a licence granted to them.

Any licence holder failing to provide a medical report within one month of a request made by the Licensing Authority will have their licence suspended until such time the Authority can be satisfied of their medical fitness.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

- 5.27 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales. The DBS also maintains the lists of individuals barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults.

The DBS makes independent barring decisions about people who have harmed, or where they are considered to pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person within the workplace. This enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer employment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves vulnerable groups including children.

- 5.28 Enhanced certificates with a check of the barred lists include details of spent and unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC), any additional information which a chief officer of police believes to be relevant and ought to be disclosed, as well as indicating whether the individual is barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults.

Spent convictions and cautions are disclosed on standard and enhanced certificates according to rules set out in legislation. Convictions which resulted in a custodial sentence, and convictions or cautions for a specified serious offence such as those involving child sexual abuse will always be disclosed on a standard or enhanced certificate.

As well as convictions and cautions, an enhanced certificate may include additional information which a chief police officer reasonably believes is relevant and ought to be disclosed. Chief police officers must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Home Office when considering disclosure.

5.29 Applicants will be required to produce at their own expense a current Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check when submitting a first time driver licence application. The Licensing Authority will only accept enhanced DBS disclosure certificates, that are applied for through North Somerset Council and dated within four weeks of the application. Previous DBS Disclosures will not be accepted by the Licensing Authority.

5.30 Subscription to the DBS Update Service allows those with standard and enhanced certificates to keep these up to date online and, with the individual's consent, allows nominees to check the status of a certificate online at any time. Subscription to the service removes the need for new certificates to be requested, reduces the administrative burden and mitigates potential delays in relicensing.

5.31 Driver applicants will be required to subscribe to the DBS update service at first licensing or for existing licence holders at the next re-check date.

5.32 All Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle driver's licence holders will be required to provide a DBS Enhanced Disclosure every 6 months. This will be carried out by North Somerset Council via the DBS update service.

Should the DBS advise that new information is available the original DBS certificate should no longer be relied upon and a new DBS certificate will be requested.

5.33 Since March 2002, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers have been listed as Regulated Occupations in the Rehabilitation Act 1974. The effect of this in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers is to render the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 inapplicable. Therefore, any caution and/or conviction, regardless of their age, will be taken into consideration by the Licensing Authority when assessing the suitability of a new or renewal application.

5.34 The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas, only foreign convictions that are held on the Police National Computer may, subject to the disclosure rules, be disclosed.

Therefore, a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal record where there have been periods living or working overseas; the same applies when an applicant has previously spent an extended period (three or more continuous months) outside the UK.

It should however be noted that some countries will not provide an 'Certificate of Good Character' unless the individual has been resident for six months or more .

5.35 This Authority will require applicants to provide where possible criminal records information or a 'Certificate of Good Character' from overseas in this circumstance to properly assess risk and support the decision-making process

For information on applying for overseas criminal record information or 'Certificates of Good Character' please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

Common Law Police Disclosure

- 5.36 The DBS is not the only source of information that should be considered as part of a fit and proper assessment for the licensing of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Common Law Police Disclosure ensures that where there is a public protection risk, the police will pass information to the employer or regulatory body to allow them to act swiftly to mitigate any danger.
- 5.37 Common Law Police Disclosure replaced the Notifiable Occupations Scheme (NOS) in March 2015 and focuses on providing timely and relevant information which might indicate a public protection risk. Information is passed on at arrest or charge, rather than on conviction which may be some time after, allowing any measures to mitigate risk to be put in place immediately.
- 5.38 This procedure provides robust safeguarding arrangements while ensuring only relevant information is passed on to employers or regulatory bodies. The Licensing authority maintains close links with the police to ensure effective and efficient information sharing procedures and protocols are in place and are being used.

Licensee self-reporting

- 5.39 Licence holders are required to notify North Somerset Council within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence. An arrest for any of the offences within this scope will result in a review by the issuing authority as to whether the licence holder is fit to continue to do so.
- 5.40 This will not however be seen as a direction that a licence should be withdrawn; it is for the licensing authority to consider what, if any, action in terms of the licence should be taken based on the balance of probabilities.
- 5.41 A failure by a licence holder to disclose an arrest that the issuing authority is subsequently advised of might be seen as behaviour that questions honesty and therefore the suitability of the licence holder regardless of the outcome of the initial allegation.
- 5.42 The Licensing Authority may, where it considers it necessary, undertake a further DBS check via the update service.

Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Police

- 5.43 In some circumstances it may be appropriate under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the licensing authority to make referrals to the DBS.

A decision to refuse or revoke a licence as the individual is thought to present a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, will be referred to the DBS.

- 5.44 These referrals may result in the person being added to a barred list and enable other licensing authorities to consider this should further applications to other authorities be made.

Relevance of Convictions, Cautions, Fixed Penalties and other relevant information

- 5.45 The Licensing Authority when considering convictions and cautions recorded against an applicant or an existing licensed driver will have regard to the “Criminal Convictions Policy” set out in **Appendix L**.
- 5.46 In assessing whether an applicant or licensed driver is a “fit and proper” person to hold a licence, the Licensing Authority will consider each case on its own merit.
- 5.47 Upon receipt of the enhanced DBS check, the Licensing Authority will assess whether any or all of the convictions and/or cautions can have real relevance to the issue of if the applicant or licensed driver is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. The Licensing Authority will also take into account any fixed penalty notices and other information, but only in so far as they are relevant to an application for a licence or impact on the continuance of an existing driver licence. In certain cases, the matter may be referred to the Council’s Licensing Committee for determination.
- 5.48 The Licensing Authority will have regard to fixed penalties when considering if an applicant is a fit and proper person. Failure to inform the Licensing Authority of any fixed penalty notices obtained during the application or licence period may result in possible rejection of the application or suspension or revocation of the licence.
- 5.49 In relation to cautions, the Licensing Authority will have regard to the nature of the infraction when considering their relevance to an application or continuance of an existing driver licence.
- 5.50 In relation to previous convictions, the Licensing Authority will have regard to the following:
- The nature of the offence/s;
 - The age of the offence/s;
 - The apparent seriousness, as gauged by the penalty applied.
- 5.51 In general terms, the more recent, serious and relevant the offence is, the less likely that an application will be granted or that an existing licence will be permitted to remain in effect.
- 5.52 The presence of past or acquired criminal convictions by a person will not automatically prevent a person holding a licence and will be assessed against the Licensing Authority’s Criminal Convictions Policy shown at **Appendix L**.

Driving licence (DVLA) checks

- 5.53 The Licensing Authority will, where considered necessary, check the DVLA database to establish a driver’s complete driving history.
- 5.54 Where this course of action is deemed necessary, the Licensing Authority will request that the driver either completes a consent form, or provides a DVLA generated code in order that the check can be carried out. The cost of any check is borne by the applicant/licensed driver.
- 5.55 Should the necessary consent, as required in Para 5.61 above not be given by the applicant/licensed driver, this will result in the application being refused or

the existing drivers licence being immediately suspended or revoked.

5.56 Hackney Carriage drivers are required to comply with the requirements of the Hackney Carriage Byelaws as shown at **Appendix G**.

Right to work checks

5.57 Since the introduction of the Immigration Act 2016, all applicants for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver's licence or renewal will need to demonstrate that they have the right to work in the UK before they can be issued with a licence. Further information can be found at **Appendix Q**

Smoking

5.58 Smoking has been prohibited in all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles since 1st July 2007. A driver found smoking or permitting smoking to take place in a licensed vehicle, will be subject to enforcement action by North Somerset Council. This will be by way of fixed penalty notice (Health Act 2006). On the third such notice issue the Licensing Authority will consider the suspension or revocation of the Hackney or Private Hire Driver licence.

In line with the North Somerset Council Smoke-free Policy, 'smoking' means the use of all tobacco products e.g. cigarettes, pipes, cigars, (with the exception of those products that have been designated as nicotine replacement therapy by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.)

Alternative smoking devices, such as electronic cigarettes, Vapour devices and any other form of such inhalation device (with or without nicotine) will also be treated as smoking tobacco for the purposes of this policy.

Mobile phones and other handheld devices

5.59 The use of any handheld devices whilst driving is prohibited. Licence holders who are found to do so may have their licence suspended or revoked.

National Register of Taxi Licence Refusals and Revocations (NR3)

5.60 The licensing authority provides information to the National Register of Taxi Licence Refusals and Revocations (NR3), a mechanism for licensing authorities to share details of individuals who have had a hackney carriage or Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) licence revoked, or an application for one refused. This is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the licensing authority – that is, assessing whether an individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage or PHV licence.

Therefore:

- Where a hackney carriage/ PHV licence is revoked, or an application for one refused, the authority will automatically record this decision on NR3.
- All applications for a new licence or licence renewal will automatically be checked on NR3. If a search of NR3 indicates a match with an applicant, the authority will seek further information about the entry on the register from the authority which recorded it. Any information received as a result of

an NR3 search will only be used in respect of the specific license application and will not be retained beyond the determination of that application.

The information recorded on NR3 itself will be limited to:

- name
- date of birth
- address and contact details
- national insurance number
- driving licence number
- decision taken
- date of decision
- date decision effective

Information will be retained on NR3 for a period of 25 years.

This is a mandatory part of applying for or renewing, a hackney carriage PHV driver licence. The authority may take to requests by other authorities for further information about entries on NR3, and will inform an applicant about the use it will make of any further information provided to it.

Information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any searches, provision or receipt of information of or under NR3 are necessary to the authority's statutory licensing functions of ensuring that all drivers are fit and proper to hold the applicable licence. It is not intended that any NR3 data will be transferred out of the United Kingdom.

If you wish to raise any issue related to the data protection legislation, including by relying on any of the rights afforded to data subjects under the GDPR, you can do so to the authority's Data Protection Officer. This includes submitting a subject access request.

You always have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Advice on how to raise a concern about handling of data can be found on the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

6. Private Hire Operators Licences

Requirements and Obligations

- 6.1 Any person who operates a Private Hire service utilising one or more Private Hire vehicles must apply to the Council for a Private Hire Operator's Licence.
- 6.2 The primary objective in licensing Private Hire operators is the safety of the public, both in the vehicles and at the operator's premises.
- 6.3 This Licensing authority will require applicants to undertake a basic disclosure from the DBS and ensure that a check is undertaken annually. Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC).

Consideration will be given to whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in **Appendix L** to this document, other than those relating to driving, meet the 'fit and proper' threshold.

If an individual holds a valid Taxi or Private Hire licence with North Somerset Council and the DBS biannual checks are up to date and acceptable then no additional check will need to be provided should they apply for an additional Operator licence.

If an application is made in a Company name then the DBS checks will be carried out for all named directors and partners of the Company. A Company holding an Operator's licence will be expected to advise the Licensing Authority of any changes in Director or partner.

- 6.4 A refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold an Operator's licence; these decisions will be made independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check.
- 6.5 Conditions will be applied to Private Hire Operator licences granted by North Somerset Council. The agreed standard conditions are shown at **Appendix N**.
- 6.6 A Private Hire vehicle may only be dispatched to a customer by a Private Hire operator who holds a Private Hire operator's licence. Such a licence permits the operator to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a Private Hire vehicle.
- 6.7 A Private Hire operator must ensure that every Private Hire vehicle is driven by a person who holds a Private Hire driver's licence.
- 6.8 All three licences:
- Private Hire operator's licence;
 - Private Hire driver's licence; and
 - Private Hire vehicle licence;
- must be issued by the same Licensing Authority.
- 6.9 A Private Hire operation must be within the district of North Somerset in order to apply for a licence. If a premise falls outside of North Somerset administrative boundaries this Licensing Authority **do not** have the authorisation to grant an operator licence.
- 6.10 Where the need arises, Licensing Authorities may jointly authorise officers from other authorities so that compliance and enforcement action can be taken against licensees from outside their area. This enables the use of enforcement powers regardless of which authority within the agreement the officer is employed by and which issued the licence. Such an agreement will enable those authorities to take action against those that are licensed by the other authority when they cross over boundaries. This will also mitigate the opportunities for drivers to evade regulation.
- 6.11 The Council will not grant a licence to an operator whose premises are located outside the district. This is to ensure that proper regulation and enforcement measures may be taken by the Council and is in no way intended to be a restraint of trade.

Booking and Dispatch Staff

- 6.12** It is noted that staff employed by an Operator to take bookings or as a vehicle dispatcher deciding which driver to send to a user, are in a position that could be exploited by those seeking to exploit children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore appropriate that all staff that have contact with private hire vehicle users and the dispatching of vehicles should not present an undue risk to the public or the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Licensing authorities should be satisfied that private hire vehicle operators can demonstrate that all staff that have contact with the public and/or oversee the dispatching of vehicles do not pose a risk to the public. The Licensing authority, as a condition of granting an operator licence, require a register of all staff that will take bookings or dispatch vehicles to be kept.

- 6.13** Operators will be required to evidence that they have had sight of a Basic DBS check on all individuals listed on their register of booking and dispatch staff and to ensure that Basic DBS checks are conducted on any individuals added to the register and that this is compatible with their policy on employing ex-offenders. DBS certificates provided by the individual should be recently issued when viewed,

alternatively the operator could use a 'responsible organisation' to request the check on their behalf. When individuals start taking bookings and dispatching vehicles for an operator they should be required, as part of their employment contract, to advise the operator of any convictions while they are employed in this role.

- 6.14** The register should be a 'living document' that maintains records of all those in these roles for the same duration as booking records are required to be kept, this will enable cross-referencing between the two records. A record that the operator has had sight of a basic DBS check certificate (although the certificate itself should not be retained) should be retained for the duration that the individual remains on the register. Should an employee cease to be on the register and later re-entered, a new basic DBS certificate should be requested and sight of this recorded.

- 6.15** Operators may outsource booking and dispatch functions but they cannot pass on the obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults. Operators should be required to evidence that comparable protections are applied by the company to which they outsource these function. Operators or applicants for a licence will be required to provide their policy on employing ex-offenders in roles that would be on the register as above. As with the threshold to obtaining a private hire vehicle operators' licence, those with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (**Appendix L**), other than those relating to driving, may not be suitable to decide who is sent to carry a child or vulnerable adult unaccompanied in a car.

Record Keeping

- 6.16** Section 56 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires private hire vehicle operators to keep records of the particulars of every booking invited or accepted, whether it is from the passenger or at the request of another operator.

- 6.17** This Licensing Authority, as a minimum, requires private hire vehicle

operators to record the following information for each booking:

1. The date of the booking and time of request
2. The name of the Hirer and/or passenger
3. The time of the pick-up
4. The location of the pick-up
5. The destination
6. The time at which the driver was allocated to the booking and the name of the person allocating the booking
7. The name and licence number of the driver assigned to the booking
8. The plate number (or other identification) of the vehicle allocated
9. The name of the person dispatching the vehicle

6.18 This information will enable the passenger to be traced if this becomes necessary and should improve driver security and facilitate enforcement. It is suggested that booking records should be retained for a minimum of six months.

6.19 Private hire vehicle operators have a duty under data protection legislation to protect the information they record. The Information Commissioner's Office provides comprehensive on-line guidance on registering as a data controller and how to meet their obligations

Gaming Machines

6.20 Operators that provide a waiting facility for members of the public and/or drivers should be aware that they cannot make gaming machines available for use. This action would be a criminal offence under the Gambling Act 2005.

6.21 It is the responsibility of the operator to ensure that appropriate planning consent exists for the operational address to be used for that purpose.

6.22 The Licensing Authority will decide whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper' person to hold an operator's licence.

Sub-contracting

6.23 Section 55A of the 1976 Act, inserted by the Deregulation Act 2015 permits Operators licensed by the Council to sub-contract a Private Hire booking to another operator licensed by the Council or to any other licensed Private Hire operator holding a Private Hire licence granted by another local Authority.

6.24 However, regardless of which operator fulfils a booking, the operator can only despatch a vehicle licensed by the same Council that licences the operator and driven by a driver licensed by that same Council.

6.25 For example, if an Operator licensed by Council X choses to sub-contract a booking to an operator licensed by Council B, that operator must despatch a vehicle with a driver licensed by Council B. Or in, reverse, if a Council B licensed Operator sub- contracts a booking to a Council X licensed operator, the vehicle despatched, and its driver, must both be licensed by Council X.

6.26 Operators that accept a booking remain legally responsible for that booking even if they sub-contract the booking to another Operator and should record the booking as normal and the fact that it was sub-contracted.

- 6.27 Customers who book through a licensed operator expect a vehicle to be provided that is directly controlled by that operator and not one that is licensed in another district. The Council aims to have the highest standards possible as appropriate for its district. Other local authorities have different standards appropriate for their district and the vehicles and standards of drivers may differ.
- 6.28 For this reason the Council does not believe that sub-contracting bookings should be common place amongst its licensed Operators. It may be appropriate for Operators to sub contract in order to provide a certain type of vehicle that is not on its fleet such as WAV (Wheelchair Assessible Vehicle).
- 6.29 The Council does not have the ability to take enforcement action against those licensed by other authorities but may, upon the investigation of a complaint, take action against an Operator where they have sub-contracted to another Operator and failed to exercise all due diligence to ensure that the person making the booking was transported in compliance with the standards imposed by the Council.

Cross Border Hiring

- 6.30 In relation to Private Hire vehicles, the 1976 Act permits members of the public to contact and book a Private Hire vehicle through any licensed Private Hire operator regardless of in which district they are licensed. Private Hire bookings are Private contracts between the Hirer and the operator and are not a matter for the Council to regulate. In this regard, the Act leaves the selection of an operator entirely to market forces and the freedom of choice to the customer.
- 6.31 The Licensing Authority intends for its Private Hire operators and their vehicles to aspire to the highest standards of service so that they are the operator of choice for its residents.
- 6.32 The Licensing Authority does however recognise that members of the public may be confused by the appearance of vehicles licensed by other authorities working in North Somerset. The Council therefore encourages its residents to understand the difference between Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriages and the requirement that Private Hire vehicles, regardless of which Authority licences them, must be booked in advance.

Insurance

- 6.33 It is considered appropriate for a Private Hire operator; and the Licensing Authority may check, that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public.

Public Safeguarding and Exploitation

- 6.34 All Operators will be required to attend a training session on safeguarding children and vulnerable persons. The training session will cover the conduct and responsibilities of those licensed. It will provide guidance in identifying when vulnerable people need protection and how to ensure they are taken to a place of safety. It also details the need to report immediately any such incident or occurrence to the police and/or social services, and provides the necessary contacts and procedures to be followed.

The training provider must be approved by the Licensing Authority and may be an internal or external provider.

6.35 New applicants will be required to attend safeguarding training prior to applying. Operators who are renewing a licence and who have not yet undertaken any training, will be expected to have met this requirement by the time their licence is next due for renewal. Failure to do so will result in their licence being suspended till such time they undertaken the training.

6.36 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse. It can involve sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse of children by adults. Licensed Operators provide a public service and have a duty of care to all passengers. They also have a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about someone who is vulnerable.

Should an Operator have any concern about the vulnerability of a child or public safeguarding they must report this immediately or pass on information or intelligence to either the Police or Licensing Authority.

Should a licence holder fail to report a concern then they will be investigated and may have their licence revoked or suspended.

Use of passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) licensed drivers

6.37 PCV licensed drivers are subject to different checks from taxi and private hire vehicle licensed drivers as the work normally undertaken, i.e. driving a bus, does not present the same risk to passengers. Members of the public are entitled to expect when making a booking with a private hire vehicle operator that they will receive a private hire vehicle licensed vehicle and driver.

The use of a driver who holds a PCV licence and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV) such as a minibus to undertake a private hire vehicle booking should not be permitted as a condition of the private hire vehicle operator's licence without the informed consent of the booker.

Where a private hire vehicle is unsuitable, for example where a larger vehicle is needed because more than eight passenger seats required or to accommodate luggage, the booker should be informed that a PSV is necessary, and that a PCV licenced driver will be used who is subject to different checks and not required to have an enhanced DBS check

7. Enforcement Policies

Criminal Records Disclosures

7.1 The Council is an approved Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Umbrella Body and applicants can obtain criminal record disclosures from the DBS through the Council. Applicants will be charged an appropriate fee determined by the Disclosure Barring Service.

7.2 The Council is bound by rules of confidentiality, and will not divulge information obtained to any third parties. The applicant for a DBS disclosure will be sent a disclosure report to their home address, the onus is on the licence applicant to show this to the Council prior to the issue or continuation of a licence.

- 7.3 The Council will operate policies and procedures in accordance with guidance and codes of practice issued by The Disclosure Barring Service. The Council's Policy statement on secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information is shown at **Appendix O**.

Enforcement Measures

- 7.4 The Licensing Authority recognises that well-directed enforcement activity not only benefits the public but also responsible members of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades.
- 7.5 The Licensing Authority will take enforcement action where it considers it necessary and proportionate to do so. In doing so, it will have regard to the Licensing objectives stated within this Policy. Enforcement will be risk-based, intelligence-led and targeted and managed in line with the Licensing Authority's Enforcement Policy.
- 7.6 A record of any enforcement and/or disciplinary action taken by the Licensing Authority or Local Authority, whether formal or informal, will be recorded on the licence holder's file. Such evidence of this, may be brought to the attention of the Licensing Committee, Sub-Committee or the Court, if further action is deemed necessary.
- 7.7 The Council will though; to discharge its role as the Licensing Authority, carry out routine and unannounced inspections of individuals, vehicles and businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.
- 7.8 The Licensing Authority may take any of the steps below upon receipt of evidence that an offence has been committed in relation to legislation or byelaws enforced by the Council:
- Informal verbal or written advice
 - Suspension of the Licence;
 - Service of Notice;
 - Revocation of the Licence;
 - Refusal to Renew;
 - Issue of a Formal Caution
 - Prosecution of an individual or company
- 7.9 Minor or first-time transgressions are likely to attract either an oral or written warning.
- 7.10 Where public safety is deemed to be in imminent danger the further use of a licensed vehicle will be suspended by notice until the defects have been remedied. The suspension notice will not be lifted until the vehicle has undergone a further inspection and passed fit for use as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle.
- 7.11 The Licensing Authority may exercise its discretion to suspend the operation of a driver's licence for a specified period. This may include occasions where the licence holder not providing the necessary DBS/Medical checks required or following a review of the licence by a licensing committee.
- 7.12 Any allegations or serious complaints made against a licensed Hackney or

Private Hire driver will be referred to the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA) for North Somerset Council. The driver can expect to have their licence revoked for the duration of any investigation and through to any formal outcome. There will be a reduced application process where the allegation is not upheld.

- 7.13 A licence holder will be referred to the appropriate Licensing Committee when either he/she has been found to be in breach of a licence issued, or convicted of a serious criminal offence. The Committee will consider the evidence and may either take no action, issue a warning or suspend or revoke a licence.
- 7.14 As an alternative to revocation, the Licensing Authority may decide that the appropriate action, in a situation where the licence is shortly to expire, not to renew the licence.
- 7.15 As an alternative to instigating a prosecution the Council will consider the issuing of a formal caution where:
- There is sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution;
 - The licence holder admits his/her guilt;
 - The licence holder agrees to be cautioned
- 7.16 The Licensing Authority will consider prosecuting licence holders for relevant offences in the following circumstances:
- Where the allegation is of a serious or repeated offence, or
 - Where the Licensing Authority proposes to issue a formal caution to the licence holder, but the offence is not admitted, or the caution accepted

8. General Arrangements

Licensing Committee and Hearings

- 8.1 The Licensing Committee of North Somerset Council has responsibility for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing regime in the district, along with the formulation and review of Policy.
- 8.2 The Committee has delegated its functions in the following way:
- A Licensing sub-committee shall deal with applications and disciplinary matters referred to it by Licensing Officers.
 - Licensing Officers have delegated powers to grant or refuse licences; to suspend or revoke licences in situations requiring immediate action; to issue oral and written warnings, notices, formal cautions; to instigate prosecutions where appropriate.
- 8.3 Licensing Hearings in relation to applicants and licensees will be carried out to an agreed procedure that allows an individual the ability to present his/her case to the Committee, be represented and ask questions. In certain circumstances the Committee will hold Licensing hearings without the public being present, where it is legally allowed to do so, for cases where personal matters are to be considered.

- 8.4 All individuals that determine whether a licence is issued will be required to undertake sufficient training. As a minimum, training for a member of a licensing committee will include: licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of CSAE, disability and equality awareness and the making of difficult and potentially controversial decisions.

All training will be formally recorded by the licensing authority and will require a signature from the person that has received the training.

Licence Applications

- 8.5 An application for a vehicle, driver or operator's licence will be made on the specified application form issued by the Licensing Authority.
- 8.6 Applications will not be processed unless all the required documentation is produced and the licence fees have been paid.
- 8.7 It is the responsibility of the individual licensee to renew an existing licence and the absence of a reminder letter will not discharge the licensee of his/her individual responsibility as set out in paragraph 8.7 below.
- 8.8 Application forms, appropriate fees, and supporting documentation should be submitted in sufficient time to allow processing of the application. It is recommended that applications are made at least at least 28 days prior to the expiry of the previous licence.
- 8.9 A licence that is not renewed by its expiry date will be deemed to have not been renewed and a fresh application for a new licence will be required, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Licensing Authority.
- 8.10 Applications will not normally be entertained from persons who have had any licence revoked either by North Somerset Council or another Local Authority previously. The NR3 register will be consulted for revocations in other Local Authority areas (see 5.60).

Table of Tariffs and Licence Fees

- 8.11 The Licensing Authority will review the prescribed Hackney Carriage fares each year between January and March and any change shall be implemented on 1st April following. The Licensing Authority shall also consider any requests in the interim for fare increases which dictate that a variation would be appropriate.
- 8.12 The Licensing Authority will annually review its licence fees and charges and implement any changes on the 1st April each year.

Taxi Ranks

- 8.13 North Somerset Council has established a number of public taxi ranks in the district and these are shown at **Appendix P**.
- 8.14 Where a genuine demand can be demonstrated for the establishment of additional public taxi ranks the Council will consider establishing new ranks subject to them being approved by the local Highway Authority.

Service Standards

- 8.15 The Council has published standards for the delivery of services and wherever possible these will be maintained in relation to the processing licence applications, dealing with service requests and complaints made to the Licensing Team.

Complaints

- 8.16 The Council will investigate complaints against licensed or unlicensed vehicles, persons or businesses and take action proportionate to the matter being investigated. Complainants shall though be encouraged in the first instance to raise their concerns directly with the licensee to seek a local resolution.
- 8.17 If a person making a complaint is not satisfied with the investigation of a complaint, the North Somerset Council's formal complaint procedure will be followed.
- 8.18 Complaints about drivers and operators provide a source of intelligence when considering the renewal of a licence or to identify problems during the period of the licence. Patterns of behaviour such as complaints against drivers, even when they do not result in further action in response to an individual complaint, may be indicative of characteristics that raise doubts over the suitability to hold a licence.

The Licensing authority will record complaints, and will analyse trends across all licensees as well as complaints against individual licensees.

- 8.19 Licensees with a high number of complaints made against them will be contacted by the licensing authority and concerns raised with the driver and operator (if appropriate). Further action in terms of the licence holder will be determined by the licensing authority, which could include no further action, the offer of training, a formal review of the licence, or formal enforcement action.
- 8.20 To ensure that passengers know who to complain to, guidance will be provided for passengers on making complaints directly to the licensing authority which will be available on the website. Ways to make complaint to the authority will be displayed in all licensed vehicles.

Drivers will be made aware of the requirement to display information on how to complain and appropriate sanctions will be brought against those that do not comply with this requirement.

Appeals

- 8.21 Any notifications of enforcement actions will include information on how to appeal, where that right of appeal exists. This will include where and within what period an appeal may be brought.

9. Accessibility

- 9.1 Drivers are under a duty to transport a disabled person's guide, hearing or other prescribed assistance dog and allow it to stay with the passenger without additional charge. Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the Licensing Authority for an exemption from the duty on medical grounds. The exemption certificate must be clearly displayed within the vehicle. Any other driver who fails to comply with this duty is guilty of an offence and liable to prosecution. If a driver is refused an exemption from the requirements to carry an assistance dog they have the right of appeal to the Magistrates Court within 28 days of being refused.
- 9.2 The Disability Discrimination (Transport Vehicles) Regulations 2005 came into force on 4th December 2006. The result of these regulations is to lift the previous exemption for transport vehicles. The effect of the regulations is to prevent any discrimination against providing transport services to disabled people.
- 9.3 The Council will encourage the Licensing of vehicles for the Carriage of disabled persons and has included within the vehicle specification at **Appendix A** guidelines for suitably adapted and accessible vehicles.
- 9.4 The Council will also work with local groups and forums to promote accessibility issues in relation to licensed vehicles.
- 9.5 The Council will encourage the improvement of driver's awareness of the needs of disabled people, encourage them to overcome any reluctance or bad practice, and to improve their abilities and confidence. The Licensing Authority will encourage drivers to undertake mobility training.
- 9.6 The Licensing Authority will maintain a list of designated wheelchair accessible taxis and Private Hire vehicles operating in its area.
- 9.7 The Licensing Authority will ensure that the designated wheelchair accessible vehicle list is made easily available to passengers, and that vehicle owners and drivers are made aware.
Lists will set out the make and model of the vehicle, together with specifying whether the vehicle is a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle. Where possible the Operator of a Private Hire vehicle will also be specified for ease of contact.
- 9.8 Drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles will be provided with clear guidance on their duties with respect to the Carriage of passengers both with and in wheelchairs.
- 9.9 An exemption from carrying out duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs may be granted to drivers if the Licensing Authority is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so on medical or physical grounds.
- 9.10 If a driver is granted exemption then an exemption certificate will be issued and must be displayed by the driver in a prominent position within the vehicle to ensure that passengers in wheelchairs are able to clearly discern if a driver has been exempted from the duties to provide assistance. Should the passenger be visually impaired the driver must provide suitable contact details for the passenger to be able to independently verify this information.

9.11 Drivers who discriminate against disabled passengers will be held personally accountable. If a driver receives a conviction for breaching their duties the Licensing Authority will review if they remain a fit and proper person to hold a drivers licence. The Council will investigate cases of alleged discrimination and take appropriate action, even where prosecution did not proceed. If a driver is employed by a company then under the Equality Act 2010 the company will be responsible for employee's actions.

VEHICLE SPECIFICATION POLICY

Introduction

A vehicle must meet the following standards to be considered for licensing either as a Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire Vehicle. These standards define the type of vehicle that is suitable for licensing. A more detailed specification regarding equipment, maintenance, documentation, markings and other requirements is contained in the Council's Vehicle Inspection Manual.

Before embarking on the purchase of a vehicle for use as a Private Hire Vehicle or Hackney Carriage you should check that it meets this specification. If the vehicle does not meet the specification you are advised to discuss the areas of difference with a Licensing Officer before making the purchase.

VEHICLE APPROVAL AND CERTIFICATION

1. The Licensed vehicle must comply in all respects with:
 - (a) Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986
 - (a) The requirements of the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations 1980;
 - (b) Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) (Great Britain) Regulations 1984
2. In addition, the licensed vehicle must comply in all respects with British and European vehicle regulations and be "type approved" to the requirements of the M1 or M1 (low volume) category of the European Whole Type Approval Directive 70/156/EEC, as amended.
3. Imported vehicles that cannot meet the requirements of 2 above will need to have been approved under the Individual Vehicle Approval Scheme (IVA) verifying that the vehicle is built to certain safety and environmental standards and has the appropriate documentation confirming this.
4. If the vehicle has been converted to run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) then a certificate issued by a member of the LPG Association will be required by the Licensing Authority to confirm satisfactory installation, examination and testing of the vehicle has been carried out in accordance with the LPG Associations Code of Practice.

Vehicle specification

5. A vehicle must be less than 8 years of age (taken from the date of the first registration in the Vehicle Registration Document) at the date of the first application for licence in respect of that vehicle.
6. The maximum age for accepting a vehicle for first time licensing by the Council may be extended for vintage or specialist built vehicles. The vehicle shall though be in good condition and capable of passing the Council's vehicle compliance test.
7. The vehicle must have a passenger seating capacity of not less than 4 persons as determined by the method of assessing vehicle capacity described in section 3 below.
8. For each passenger carried in the licensed vehicle there shall be available a properly fitted and maintained seat belt.
9. 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.

10. Highly tinted and blacked out windows are not permitted. The vehicle must be able to comply with the relevant MOT standards and those contained within the vehicle testing manual.
11. The vehicle must be right hand drive, but left-hand drive will be permitted where the vehicle is only exclusively manufactured as a left-hand drive vehicle e.g. imported limousine.

Vehicle dimensions and seating capacity

Vehicles licensed to carry up to 4 passengers (saloons, estates)

12. Operators should bear in mind that the manufacturers claimed seating capacity may not always be the same as the Council's licensed seating capacity scheme as detailed below.
13. **Height:** From the top of the seat cushions to the roof at the lowest part (inside) must not be less than 865 mm (34 inches approx.)
14. **Knee Space:** **Front Seat** - there must be not less than 750 mm (29 ½ inches approx.) unobstructed space between the leading edge of the dash board and the back of the seat being measured.
Rear seats - there must be not less than 750 mm (29 ½ inches approx.) unobstructed space between the front surface of all rear seat backs and the back of the seat in front, measured with the front seat located as specified above.
15. **Seat Depth:** fixed passenger seats (measured from the back of the seat to the front edge of the seat cushion) must be no less than 406 mm (16 inches approx.)
16. **Seat Width:** fixed passenger seats (measured along the front edge of the seat) must allow at least 406 mm (16 inches approx.) per person.

Vehicles licensed to carry between 5 and 8 passengers

17. **Height:** From the top of the seat cushions to the roof at the lowest part (inside) must not be less than 865 mm (34 inches approx.)
18. **Knee Space: Front Seat** - there must be not less than 750 mm (29 ½ inches approx.) unobstructed space between the leading edge of the dash board and the back of the seat being measured.
19. **Rear/middle seats** - there must be not less than 650 mm (25 ½ inches approx.) unobstructed space between the front surface of seat backs and the back of the seat in front, measured with the front seat located as specified above.
20. **Seat Depth:** fixed passenger seats (measured from the back of the seat to the front edge of the seat cushion) must be no less than 406 mm (16 inches approx.)
21. **Seat Width:** fixed passenger seats (measured along the front edge of the seat) must allow at least 406 mm (16 inches approx.) per person.
22. **Facing seats:** the distance between the seat backs measured in a horizontal plane along the top surface of the seating cushion must be not less than 1300 mm (51 inches approx.). The distance between the front edges of the seat cushions must be not less than 425 mm (16 ¾ inches approx.).

ACCESSIBILITY

23. 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 or rear of the vehicle.
24. Where a vehicle is utilised for the Carriage of passengers in a wheelchair, the following conditions shall apply:
- (a) Access to and exit from the wheelchair position must not be obstructed in any manner at any time except by wheelchair loading apparatus.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) A suitable restraint must be available for the occupant of a wheelchair.
 - (d) Access ramps or lifts to the vehicle must be securely fixed prior to use, and be able to support the wheelchair, occupant and helper.
 - (e) Ramps and lifts must be securely stored in the vehicle before it may move off.
25. Any equipment fitted to the vehicle for lifting a wheelchair into the vehicle must comply 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, tested at the required intervals and be available for use at all times.
26. The Equality Act 2010 seeks to place duties on drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles. The duties will apply to the driver of any wheelchair accessible vehicle which is on the Authority's list of "Designated Vehicles".
The duties are as follows:
- to carry the passenger whilst in a wheelchair not to make any additional charge for doing so
 - if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat, to have capacity to carry the wheelchair also to take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safe and reasonable comfort;
 - and to give the passenger such mobility assistance, as is reasonably required. the driver must also offer to load the passenger's luggage into and out of the vehicle.
27. A vehicle should only be included in the Council's list if it would be possible for the user of a wheelchair to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

The Council on an individual basis, prior to licensing, will assess the overall suitability of a vehicle for the Carriage of disabled passengers. Applicants therefore should discuss the purchase of a vehicle adapted to carry disabled passengers with the Council, prior to purchase.

TRAILERS

26. Trailers may only be used with the prior approval of the Authority and subject to the following requirements:
- (a) Trailers can only be used in connection with Private Hire bookings and cannot be used for plying for Hire on a rank;
 - (b) 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;
 - (c) The vehicle insurance must include cover for towing a trailer;

- (d) Trailers must not be left unattended anywhere on the highway;
- (e) The speed restrictions applicable to trailers must be observed at all times;
- (f) A suitable lid or other approved means of enclosure shall be fitted to secure and cover the contents of the trailer whenever in use.

Applicant criminal record checks

- 27. This Licensing authority will require applicants for vehicle licences to undertake a basic disclosure from the DBS and ensure that a check is undertaken annually. Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC).
- 28. Consideration will be given to whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in Appendix L to this document, other than those relating to driving, meet the 'fit and proper' threshold.
- 29. If an individual holds a valid Taxi or Private Hire driver licence with North Somerset Council and the DBS twice-yearly checks are up to date and acceptable then no additional check will need to be provided should they apply for a vehicle licence.

HACKNEY CARRIAGES CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

The holder of the licence shall comply with the provisions of The Town Police Clauses Act 1847, Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, The North Somerset Council Hackney Carriage Byelaws and the conditions detailed below: -

References to the "Council" in these conditions mean North Somerset Council.

1. Single Licensing of Vehicle

This Licence is issued on the condition that the Hackney Carriage to which it relates is not licensed as either a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle by another Authority. If North Somerset Council becomes aware of other vehicle licences (Hackney Carriage or Private Hire) running concurrently with this licence, then this licence shall be revoked.

2. Alterations of Vehicle

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made at any time while the licence is in force, without the prior approval of the Council.

3. Maintenance of Vehicle

The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment shall at all times, when the vehicle is in use or available for Hire, be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition. All relevant statutory requirements including those contained in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, as amended by the Road Traffic Acts 1988 and 1991, or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof shall be fully complied with.

4. Roof Signs and Licence Plates

- 4.1 A roof sign bearing the word "TAXI" shall be carried on the roof of the vehicle in such a manner as to be easily visible and capable of being removed by an authorised officer of the Council, or a Police Officer.
- 4.2 The roof sign must be connected to the vehicles electrical system and should be illuminated when the vehicle is standing or plying for Hire within the North Somerset District.
- 4.3 A rear licence plate identifying the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage shall be securely fixed by screws, bolts or other approved means externally to the rear of the vehicle in a conspicuous position and in such a manner as to be easily removed by an authorised officer of the Council or a Police Officer.
- 4.3 The licence plates shall remain the property of the Council and must be returned within 7 days of a vehicle ceasing to be licensed or used as a Hackney Carriage.

5. Passengers

- 5.1 The licence holder shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in the licensed vehicle any greater number of persons than that prescribed in the Licence and on the Plate issued by the Council and affixed to the vehicle.

6. Vehicle Markings

- 6.1 Subject to the approval of the Council the details of the name, address, telephone number and company logo (or any combination thereof) of the proprietor of the Hackney Carriage may be displayed on front doors, of the vehicle. Words, numbers and graphics used in connection with this requirement shall comply with the specification in paragraph 6.2 below
- 6.2 All words, numbers and graphics placed on the vehicle shall comply with the following specification: -
- 6.2.1 Only one set of details of the vehicle's proprietor may be displayed per door on the vehicle.
- 6.2.2 Lettering should not be more than 6 inches high
- 6.3 The licence holder shall display inside the vehicle in such a position as to be visible at all times to persons conveyed therein the number of this licence and the maximum number of persons who may be carried by the vehicle.
- 6.4 There shall be displayed within the vehicle for the information of passengers, a table of fares provided by the Council and a notice stating the office to which any complaints respecting the vehicle and the driver should be addressed, and any other notice reasonably required by the Council.
- 6.5 No signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, numbers, letter figures, symbols, emblems or devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, or in or from the vehicles except as may be required by statutory provision or required or permitted by these conditions.
- 6.6 The licence holder may display on suitably adapted vehicles a form of words or a symbol indicating that the vehicle has been adapted for use by disabled persons. The Council will however require evidence of the acceptability of such adaptation and shall approve the form of words or symbols.

7. Commercial Advertising on Vehicles

Advertising will be allowed on the licensed vehicle subject to it being in accordance with the Council's Vehicle Advertising Policy.

8. Change of Address

The licence holder shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address, within 7 days of such a change taking place.

9. Convictions

Licence holders will be required to provide a basic DBS disclosure prior to and at renewal of any licence.

Within 48 hours of having been **arrested**, cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence the licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of that event and if the Licensing Authority is not notified within the requisite period the licence may be automatically revoked.

10. Deposit of Driver's Licences

If the Licence Holder permits or employs any other person to drive the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage, he shall, before that person commences to drive the vehicle, cause the driver to deliver to him his Hackney Carriage driver's licence for retention, until the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive the vehicle, or any other vehicle of his.

11. Vehicle Insurance

- 11.1 At all times during the currency of the licence, the licence holder shall keep in force in relation to the use of the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage a Policy of insurance covering the vehicle for use for Hire or reward, and complying with the requirements of the relevant legislation. The Licence Holder shall produce vehicle insurance documents on demand to the Council at any time during the period of the licence, and allow retention of a copy of the insurance on file.
- 11.2 Before permitting any licensed Hackney Carriage driver to drive the vehicle, the licence holder shall ensure that the driver is adequately insured to do so.

12. Accidents

Any accident or damage involving the licensed vehicle must be reported to the Council during the next working day or within 72 hours, whichever is the sooner. This may be an oral report in the first instance but must be followed up in writing. Electronic notifications are acceptable.

13. Certificates of Compliance and MOT

- 13.1 All vehicles shall have a current MOT certificate issued under the National MOT scheme and have had an annual compliance test carried out by a Council Approved Testing Station.
- 13.2 All vehicles over 8 years old shall have an MOT test under the National MOT scheme and a compliance test carried out by a Council Approved Testing Station every 6 months. A licence shall then be issued for 6 months.

14. Vehicle Road Fund Licence

The Licence Holder must ensure that at all times the vehicle is covered by a current vehicle road fund licence.

15. Taximeters

All Hackney Carriages shall be fitted with a taximeter, which conforms to the following specification: -

- 15.1 The taximeter shall be an automatic date controlled meter of a type approved by the Council.
- 15.2 The meter shall be capable of displaying the various tariffs as approved by the Council, including extra charges recoverable under the approved Table of Fares.
- 15.3 The meter shall be located within the vehicle in such a position that any fares and charges displayed are visible to persons travelling in the vehicle. Taxi fares are a maximum and in principle are open to downward negotiation between passenger and driver.
- 15.4 The taximeter shall be calibrated and set to the Council agreed charging distances and tariffs currently in force. The taximeter must be sealed with an official Council seal by a person authorised by the Council to seal taximeters. The taximeter must also be sealed in such a way that the fares and tariffs set into the meter cannot be tampered with.
- 15.5 The proprietor of the vehicle shall present to the Council upon grant of a licence, a change in the table of fares, or any other re-calibration, adjustment, repair or replacement of a taximeter, a signed certificate stating that the taximeter fitted to the licensed vehicle has been set and calibrated to the Council agreed charging distances and tariffs currently in force.

15.6 Any Council seal, which is tampered with without good reason, will render this licence liable to suspension or revocation.

16. Radio Communications Equipment

All radio transceiving equipment, except mobile telephones, fitted to the vehicle shall be type approved mobile radio equipment as licensed by the Radio Communications Agency under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949.

17. Assistance Dogs

No driver shall refuse (unless specifically exempted by the Council) to convey an assistance dog with its owner or keeper. The assistance dog shall be carried in the rear of the vehicle, free of charge.

18. Safety Equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for Hire a suitable and efficient fire extinguisher that complies with the current national standards specification.

19. Seat Belts

For each passenger carried in the licensed vehicle there shall be available a properly fitted and maintained seat belt.

20. Licence Documents

The Licence and attached conditions must be kept at a place from where the vehicle is operated. and must be readily available for inspection by a duly authorised Council Officer or Police Officer. This licence must be returned to the Council upon its revocation, suspension, discontinuance or for annual renewal.

21. Vehicle Inspections

The licensed vehicle shall be examined at a Council appointed garage on an annual basis.

22. Smokefree Vehicle

The whole of the vehicle shall be kept smokefree at all times and no smoking signs of a type required by the legislation currently in force shall be prominently displayed within each passenger compartment of the vehicle.

23. Suspension or Revocation of Licences

The Council reserves its right to take such action, which it is entitled to take, including (without limitation) suspension or revocation of the licence, where it deems it necessary.

24. Revocation and Modification of Conditions

The Council reserves the right, (at its own behest and at any time), to revoke, vary, or modify any of these conditions and/or to make such additional conditions as it may deem requisite, either generally or in respect of any licence or occasion.

25. Grievances

By virtue of Section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 any person who is aggrieved by any condition attached to the licence may appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receipt of the licence

PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

The holder of the licence shall comply with the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the conditions detailed below: -

References to the "Council" in these conditions mean North Somerset Council.

1. Single Licensing of Vehicle

This Licence is issued on the condition that the Private Hire vehicle to which it relates is not licensed as either a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle by another Authority. If North Somerset Council becomes aware of other vehicle licences (Hackney Carriage or Private Hire) running concurrently with this licence, then this licence shall be revoked.

2. Alterations of Vehicle

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made at any time while the licence is in force, without the prior approval of the Council.

3. Maintenance of Vehicle

The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment shall at all times, when the vehicle is in use or available for Hire, be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition. All relevant statutory requirements including those contained in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, as amended by the Road Traffic Acts 1988 and 1991, or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof shall be fully complied with.

4. Licence Plates

- 4.1 Front and rear licence plates identifying the vehicle as a Private Hire vehicle shall be securely fixed by screws, bolts or other approved means externally to the front and rear of the vehicle in a conspicuous position and in such a manner as to be easily removed by an authorised officer of the Council or a Police Officer.
- 4.2 The plates shall remain the property of the Council and must be returned within 7 days of a vehicle ceasing to be licensed.

5. Passengers

The licence holder shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in the licensed vehicle any greater number of persons than that prescribed in the Licence and on the Plate issued by the Council and affixed to the vehicle.

6. Vehicle Markings

- 6.1 Vehicle proprietors shall display on both front doors the name of the company or the name of the licence holder, together with the appropriate telephone number. The lettering must be between 50mm (2 inches approx) and 150mm (6 inches approx) high. Before a display is applied to a vehicle the Council shall approve it. The word "taxi" or "cab(s)" shall not be used.
- 6.2 No signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, numbers, letter figures, symbols, emblems or devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, or in or from the vehicles except as may be required by statutory provision or required or permitted by these conditions.

- 6.3 The licence holder may display on suitably adapted vehicles a form of words or a symbol indicating that the vehicle has been adapted for use by disabled persons. The Council will however require evidence of the acceptability of such adaptation and shall approve the form of words or symbols.
- 6.4 There shall be displayed in all Private Hire vehicles a sign supplied by the Council, comprising a Council logo and telephone number for customer complaints. This sign shall be affixed to the rear near or offside passenger door windows or quarter lights.
- 6.5 There shall be displayed inside the inside the vehicle a licence plate supplied by the Council. The licence plate shall be visible to passengers in the vehicle.

7. Commercial Advertising on Vehicles

Advertising will be allowed on the licensed vehicle subject to it being in accordance with the Council's Vehicle Advertising Policy.

8. Change of Address

The licence holder shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address, including the name and address of any Company from whom bookings are taken, within 7 days of such a change taking place.

9. Convictions

Licence holders will be required to provide a basic DBS disclosure prior to and at renewal of any licence.

Within 48 hours of having been arrested, cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence the licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of that event and if the Licensing Authority is not notified within the requisite period the licence may be automatically revoked.

10. Deposit of Driver's Licences

If the Licence Holder permits or employs any other person to drive the vehicle as a Private Hire Vehicle, he shall, before that person commences to drive the vehicle, cause the driver to deliver to him his Private Hire Vehicle driver's licence for retention, until the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive the vehicle, or any other vehicle of his.

11. Vehicle Insurance

- 11.1 At all times during the currency of the licence, the licence holder shall keep in force in relation to the use of the vehicle as a Private Hire Vehicle a Policy of insurance covering the vehicle for use for Hire or reward, and complying with the requirements of the relevant legislation. The Licence Holder shall produce vehicle insurance documents on demand to the Council at any time during the period of the licence, and allow retention of a copy of the insurance on file.
- 11.2 Before permitting any licensed Private Hire Vehicle driver to drive the vehicle, the licence holder shall ensure that the driver is adequately insured to do so.

12. Accidents

Any accident or damage involving the licensed vehicle must be reported to the Council during the next working day or within 72 hours, whichever is the sooner. This may be an oral report in the first instance but must be followed up in writing

13. Certificates of Compliance and MOT

- 13.3 All vehicles shall have a current MOT certificate issued under the National MOT scheme and have had an annual suitability test carried out by a Council Approved Testing Station.
- 13.4 All vehicles over 8 years old shall have an MOT test under the National MOT scheme and have a compliance test carried out by a Council Approved Testing Station every 6 months. A licence shall be issued for six months.

14. Vehicle Road Fund Licence

The Licence Holder must ensure that at all times the vehicle is covered by a current vehicle road fund licence.

15. Radio Communications Equipment

All radio transceiving equipment, except mobile telephones, fitted to the vehicle shall be type approved mobile radio equipment as licensed by the Radio Communications Agency under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949.

16. Assistance Dogs

No driver shall refuse (unless specifically exempted by the Council) to convey an assistance dog with its owner or keeper. The assistance dog shall be carried in the rear of the vehicle, free of charge.

17. Safety Equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for Hire a suitable and efficient fire extinguisher that complies with the current national standards specification.

18. Seat Belts

For each passenger carried in the licensed vehicle there shall be available a properly fitted and maintained seat belt.

19. Licence Documents

The Licence and attached conditions must be kept at a place from where the vehicle is operated and must be readily available for inspection by a duly authorised Council Officer or Police Officer. The licence must be returned to the Council upon its revocation, suspension, discontinuance or for annual renewal.

20. Vehicle Inspections

The licensed vehicle shall be examined at a Council appointed garage on an annual basis.

21. Smokefree Vehicle

The whole of the vehicle shall be kept smokefree at all times and no smoking signs of a type required by the legislation currently in force shall be prominently displayed within each passenger compartment of the vehicle.

22. Suspension or Revocation of Licences

The Council reserves its right to take such action, which it is entitled to take, including (without limitation) suspension or revocation of the licence, where it deems it necessary.

23. Revocation and Modification of Conditions

The Council reserves the right, to revoke, vary, or modify any of these conditions and/or to make such additional conditions as it may deem requisite, either generally or in respect of any licence or occasion.

24. Grievances

By virtue of Section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 any person who is aggrieved by any condition attached to the licence may appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receipt of the licence.

CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO HORSE-DRAWN VEHICLES

- 1 The Licence holder shall be responsible for the safe handling and proper care of the horses employed in the operation of the licensed vehicle.
- 2 The Licence holder must satisfy the Licensing Authority that he is competent to drive horses. The Licence holder must produce satisfactory proof of his driving ability and any expense incurred in producing such proof shall be met by the Licence holder.
- 3 The Licence holder shall be responsible, when in charge of the vehicle, for the collection and satisfactory hygienic disposal of horse excrement.
- 4 The Licence holder shall, at all times when acting in accordance with the driver's licence, wear the official badge issued by the Licensing Authority in such a position as to be plainly and distinctly visible.
- 5 The Licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of any change of address and, if not self-employed any change of employer.
- 6 The Licence holder shall, at the request of any authorised Officer of the Licensing Authority or of any Police Officer, produce his licence for inspection.
- 7 On the surrender, revocation or suspension of the licence the official driver's badge must be returned to the North Somerset Council Licensing Office.
- 8 Any change in the medical condition of the Licence holder, which could impair his driving ability, shall be notified immediately to the Licensing Authority.
- 9 Any change in the physical condition of the horse must be notified to the Licensing Authority.
10. The licensee shall ensure the feet of the horse are properly trimmed and if shod, the shoes must be properly fitted and in good condition.
- 11 Details of any offence of which the Licence holder has been convicted shall be notified to the Licensing Authority.
- 12 The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall not, when standing or plying for Hire, wash such Carriage in any street or public place.
- 14 The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not while standing, plying or driving for Hire, drive or allow to be driven, or harness or allow to be harnessed to the Carriage any animal in such condition to expose any person conveyed or being in such Carriage, or any person traversing any street, to risk or injury.
- 14 The driver of a Hackney Carriage drawn by an animal or animals shall, while standing, plying or driving for Hire, cause every part of the harness of the animal or animals drawing the Carriage to be kept in order, so that the animal or animals shall be properly and securely attached to the Carriage and under due control.
- 15 A proprietor or driver of a horse drawn Hackney Carriage shall not, in any street, feed or allow to be fed any horse harnessed or otherwise attached to such Carriage, except with food contained in a proper bag or other receptacle suspended from the head of such horse or from the centre pole of the Carriage or which is held in and delivered with the hand of the person feeding such horse.

- 16 The official licence plate, issued by the Licensing Authority, must be affixed to the rear of the vehicle. Such licence plate shall be returned to the Licensing Authority if the vehicle licence is surrendered, revoked or suspended.
- 17 The official fare card must be displayed inside the vehicle to be clearly visible to passengers in the vehicle at all times subject to any specific exemption granted by the Licensing Authority.
- 18 When the vehicle is being used for Hire, no person shall be authorised to drive the vehicle other than a person currently licensed as a horse-drawn Hackney Carriage driver and wearing the official badge.
- 19 No horse shall be harnessed to, or used in connection with the vehicle hereby licensed unless, within the preceding twelve months, a veterinary surgeon has examined the horse and issued a certificate of fitness. Such certificate shall be delivered to the Licensing Authority immediately.
- 20 No horse shall be in harness for more than seven hours in any one day and if in harness for seven consecutive hours, shall during that period have a break of not less than one hour and shall be fed and watered.
- 21 A horse in which in any one day is harnessed to, or used in connection with a licensed Hackney Carriage shall not be used at any time during that day for any other purpose.
- 22 In any other respects, the provisions and conditions relating to Hackney Carriages, as set out in the attached conditions, apply to horse-drawn Carriages except in so far as the context of the provisions or conditions clearly dictates that reference is being made to motor vehicles or the driving of such motor vehicles.

Additional conditions attached to Licences for Stretched Limousines

1. The Private Hire vehicle must be fitted with tyres that meet both the size and weight specification for the vehicle at all times for the duration of the licence.
2. Before accepting a booking, the operator must make it clear to the Hirer that the vehicle is licensed for no more than 8 passengers.
3. If passengers are under the age of 18, there should be no alcohol in the vehicle for consumption or otherwise.
4. The licence holder shall not supply any media that, given its age classification or content, is unsuitable for the age of the passengers in the vehicle.
5. The operator of the vehicle shall ensure that a performing rights licence is held where recorded music is played for the entertainment of the passengers being carried in the licensed vehicle.
6. The vehicle must contain two fully functional portable multipurpose powder type fire extinguishers approved to BS EN 3. Separate extinguishers shall be provided in the driver and passenger compartments. A sign indicating the presence of the fire extinguisher in the passenger compartment shall be prominently displayed.
7. Use of fog machines, lasers, fibre optics, disco balls and other equipment should comply with relevant Health and Safety regulations and should not be used in a manner which is likely to distract the Private Hire vehicle driver or other road users.
8. Where strobe lights are to be used, those hiring the vehicle should be notified in advance both verbally and in writing. Strobe lighting should not be used or turned off if so requested. Use should comply with relevant Health and Safety regulations and should not be used in a manner which is likely to distract the Private Hire vehicle driver or other road users.
9. The Proprietor of the Private Hire vehicle shall:
 - 9.1 Provide sufficient means by which any person in the Private Hire vehicle may communicate with the driver during the hiring.
 - 9.2 Provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment.
 - 9.3 Provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in the Private Hire vehicle and separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

Licensed Vehicle Advertising Policy

1. Subject to the approval of the Council, the following advertising is allowed on a licensed vehicle: -
 - 1.1 Details of the name, address, telephone number and company logo (or any combination thereof) of the proprietor of the licensed vehicle may be displayed on a bonnet, front door, rear facing door, hatch or boot of the vehicle. Words, numbers and graphics used in connection with this requirement shall comply with the specification in paragraph 2 below.
 - 1.2 An advertisement affixed to the rear doors only of the vehicle and not to exceed 600mm x 450 mm (24 inches x 18 inches approx.)
 - 1.3 Full vehicle advertising is permitted on licensed vehicles if it forms part of a full vehicle livery scheme advertising a single product, service or company.
2. All words, numbers and graphics placed on the vehicle in relation to the vehicle proprietors' details shall comply with the following specification:-
 - 2.1 No words, letters or graphics may be displayed on the front or rear windows of the vehicle.
 - 2.2 Only one set of details of the vehicle's proprietor may be displayed per location on the vehicle. Location on the vehicle is defined as the front, side (left and right) and rear of the vehicle.
 - 2.3 Lettering should not be more than 6 inches high unless a dispensation has been granted by the Council based on a proven need from the applicant.
 - 2.4 Graphics may be displayed on the outside of the vehicle as follows:-
 - a) On bonnets, front or rear facing doors, hatch or boot, maximum size to be not greater than 150 mm high by 150 mm wide (6 inches by 6 inches approx.)
 - b) On front passenger doors and sides of the vehicle, no size restriction.
3. No reflective materials shall be used in the lettering or graphics of any advertising placed on the vehicle
4. The content of any advertising on the vehicle shall be legal, decent and truthful.

Hackney Carriage Byelaws (as amended and adopted by North Somerset Council)

Byelaws made under Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Section 171 of the Public Health Act 1875 by Woodspring District Council with respect to Hackney Carriages in the district of Woodspring.

INTERPRETATION

1. Throughout these byelaws 'the Council' means the District Council of Woodspring and 'the District' means the District of Woodspring.

Provisions regulating the way the number of each Hackney Carriage corresponding with the number of its licence, shall be displayed.

2. (a) The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall cause the number of the licence granted to him in respect of the Carriage to be legibly painted or marked on the outside and inside of the Carriage or on plates affixed thereto.
- (b) A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall:
 - (i) Not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer any such number plate to be concealed from public view while the Carriage is standing or plying for Hire;
 - (ii) Not cause or permit the Carriage to stand or ply for Hire with any such painting, marking or plate so defaced that any figure or materials is illegible.

Provisions regulating how Hackney Carriages are to be furnished or provided.

3. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall:
 - (a) provide sufficient means by which any person in the Carriage may communicate with the driver;
 - (b) cause the roof or covering to be kept water-tight;
 - (c) provide any necessary windows and a means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side;
 - (d) cause the seats to be properly cushioned or covered;
 - (e) cause the floor to be provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering;
 - (f) cause the fittings and furniture generally to be kept in a clean condition, well maintained and in every way fit for public service;
 - (g) provide means for securing luggage if the Carriage is so constructed as to carry luggage;
 - (h) provide an efficient fire extinguisher which shall at all times be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use;

- (i) provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in such Carriage and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver;
 - (j) provide and maintain an electric light in the interior of the Carriage for the use of any person hiring or being driven therein.
 - (k) not to cause or permit any signs, advertising material or printed matter to be displayed on the exterior of the Carriage without the approval of the Council unless required by these byelaws.
4. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall cause the same to be provided with a taximeter so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the following requirements, that's is to say.
- a) the taximeter shall be fitted with a key, flag or other device the turning of which will bring the machinery of the taximeter into action and cause the word 'HIRED' to appear on the face of the taximeter;
 - b) such key, flag or other device shall be capable of being locked in such a position that the machinery of the taximeter if not in action and that no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter;
 - c) when the machinery of the taximeter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the taximeter in clearly legible figures a fare not exceeding the rate or fare which the proprietor or driver is entitled to demand and take for the Hire of the Carriage by distance in pursuance of the fare scale approved by the Council and in force for the district;
 - d) the word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon;
 - e) the taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof are at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the Carriage and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring;
 - f) the taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the Carriage with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances.

Provisions regulating the conduct of the proprietors and drivers of Hackney Carriages plying within the district in their several employments and determining whether such drivers shall wear any and what badges.

5. The driver of a Hackney Carriage provided with a taximeter shall: -
- a) when standing or plying for Hire, keep the key, flag or other device fitted in pursuance of the byelaw in that behalf locked in the position in which no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter;
 - b) before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the said key, flag or other device, so that the word 'HIRED' is legible on the face of the taximeter and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring;

- c) cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of a hiring which is during the period beginning one hour before sunset and ending at sunrise and at any other time requested by the Hirer.
6. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not tamper with or permit any person to tamper with any taximeter with which the Carriage is provided with the fittings thereof, or with the seals affixed thereto.
7. The driver of a Hackney Carriage shall, when plying for Hire in any street and not actually Hired;
 - a) proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands appointed by the Council;
 - b) if a stand, at the time of his arrival, is occupied by the full number of Carriages authorised to occupy it, proceed to another stand;
 - c) on arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of Carriages authorised to occupy it, station the Carriage immediately behind the Carriage or Carriages on the stand and to face in the same direction;
 - d) from time to time when any other Carriage immediately in front has driven off or moved forward cause his Carriage to be moved forward to fill the place previously occupied by the Carriage driven off or moved forward.
8. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage, when standing or plying for Hire, shall not, by calling out or otherwise, importune any person to Hire such Carriage and shall not make use of the services of any other person for the purpose.
9. The driver of a Hackney Carriage shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.
10. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage who has agreed or has been Hired to be in attendance with the Carriage at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such Carriage at such appointed time and place.
11. The driver of a Hackney Carriage when Hired to drive to any destination shall, subject to any directions given by the Hirer, proceed to that destination by the shortest available route.
12. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such Carriage any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the Carriage.
13. If a badge has been provided by the Council and delivered to the driver of a Hackney Carriage he shall, when standing or plying for Hire, and when Hired, wear that badge in such position and manner as to be plainly visible.
14. The driver of a Hackney Carriage so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by any person hiring or seeking to Hire the Carriage;
 - a) convey a reasonable quantity of luggage;
 - b) afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading;
 - c) afford reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any building, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such a person.

15. a) the proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall cause a statement of the fares fixed by the Council to be exhibited inside the Carriage, in clearly distinguishable letters and figures.
- b) the proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage bearing a statement of fares in accordance with this byelaw shall not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer the letters or figures in the statement to be concealed or rendered illegible at any time while the Carriage is playing for Hire or being used for Hire.

Provisions securing the safe custody and re-delivery of any property accidentally left in Hackney Carriages and fixing the charges to be made in respect thereof.

16. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall immediately after the termination of any hiring or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the Carriage for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.
17. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall, if any property accidentally left therein by any person who may have conveyed in the Carriage be found by or handed to him;
 - a) carry it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours, if not sooner claimed by or on behalf of its owner to the office of the Council, and leave it in the custody of the officer in charge of the office on his giving a receipt for it;
 - b) be entitled to receive from any person to whom the property shall be re-delivered an amount equal to five pence in the pound of its estimated value (or the fare for the distance from the place of finding to the office of the Council, whichever be the greater) but not more than five pounds.

Penalties

18. Every person who shall offend against any of these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds and in case of a continuing offence to a further fine not exceeding five pounds for each day during which the offence continues after conviction therefore.

<p>THE COMMON SEAL of the WOODSPRING DISTRICT L.S. COUNCIL was hereunto affixed the 14th day of November 1979 In the presence of:-</p> <p>TW Cox Chairman of the Council RH Moon Chief Executive and Clerk</p> <p>The forgoing byelaws are hereby confirmed by the Secretary of State and shall come into operation on the 2nd day of January 1980.</p> <p>R. F. D. Shuffrey An assistant Under Secretary of State 28 December 1979</p>	<p>The COMMON SEAL of WOODSPRING DISTRICT COUNCIL) L.S. was hereunto affixed on the 18th day of September 1985 in the presence of:-</p> <p>RL Harrison – Chairman RH Moon – Chief Executive and Clerk</p> <p>The forgoing byelaw is hereby confirmed by the Secretary of State and shall come into operation on the 16th day of January 1986.</p> <p>P. E. Pickering An assistant Secretary in the Department of Transport on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. 4 December 1985</p>
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Exemption from requirement to display Vehicle Identification.

1. The aim is to ensure public safety whilst taking a balanced approach to licensing requirements. The objective is the provision of an exemption to allow 'executive vehicles' to operate without displaying external identification plates.

2. Introduction

2.1 The displaying of the external identification plate on a licensed vehicle and a driver's badge is important in terms of public safety and reassurance. They indicate to the travelling public that prior to being licensed both the vehicle and the driver have been subjected to checks to ensure their (the public's) safety. The visible licence number of the vehicle and driver affords members of the public and other persons such as the Police traceability via the local Licensing Authority.

2.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires that Private Hire vehicles display an identification plate and drivers of those vehicles wear a driver's badge. The same legislation also allows North Somerset Council to exempt vehicles from the need to display an identification plate and, where that exemption applies, the requirement to wear a Private Hire Driver badge.

3. Details

3.1 Exemptions from displaying identification plates may be in respect of individual vehicles only and based upon evidence based need. Applications for exemptions relating to a fleet of vehicles will not be allowed.

3.2 Each application will be assessed on its own merit.

3.3 Applications for exemption from the requirement to display identification plates may be considered where the following requirements are met;

a) Vehicles must be of a standard of comfort and equipped to a level higher than that of a 'standard' Private Hire Vehicle. It is not intended to form a prescriptive list of acceptable vehicles because this may be subjective and require frequent update.

Relevant considerations as to whether a vehicle meets this standard include but are not limited to cost, reputation, specification, appearance, perception, superior comfort levels and seating specification i.e. whether the vehicle offers additional space per passenger opposed to standard vehicles.

b) The vehicle will be in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim and seating. Interior seating will usually be leather and the cabin air conditioned to maintain passenger comfort.

c) The type of work undertaken is 'executive' in nature. There must be a demonstrable need for an exemption to apply rather than a one-off contract. The type of work that may be considered 'executive' may include:

- Corporate bookings to transport employees and clients on business related journeys
- Other journeys where the client specifically requires a vehicle without any Private Hire plates or signage on it at the time of booking
- Bookings for clients (for example politicians and celebrities) who for security or personal safety reasons would not want the vehicle to be identifiable as a Private Hire vehicle.
- The percentage of 'executive' work undertaken by the vehicle must constitute at least 75% of the total work carried out by the vehicle.
- An application to renew an exemption from the display of identity plates must be accompanied by a copy (preferable electronic) of the relevant Private Hire Operator records to evidence the nature of the work carried out over the previous licence period.
- Operator records must also detail evidence of contracts with clients which require vehicles supplied to be exempt from the display of identity plates.
- A dress code commensurate with executive work is required. Applicants to provide details of the dress code (suit/jacket or equivalent) which the operator(s) for whom they work require them to adhere to. Dress code must be followed at all times the vehicle is being used to undertake a booking relating to executive work.

3.4 Where a proprietor wishes to make an application for a vehicle to be exempt from displaying identification plates they will be required to complete the appropriate application form. The application form will be accompanied by documentation that supports the application and the appropriate fee shown in the published tariff.

3.5 A notice of exemption from displaying identification plates will be granted at the Council's discretion. The applicant must provide sufficient documentary evidence to support their application. Such evidence may include:

- a) A letter from each customer indicating:
 - i) Why they require a vehicle which does not display an identity plate,
 - ii) Whether they require privacy glass, and why privacy glass is required.
 - iii) The type of vehicle they require.
- b) A letter from the Private Hire Operator for who work is undertaken stating the vehicle registration number of the vehicle to which this application relates and detailing the work that will be carried out and the percentage of the work to be carried out.
- c) Copies of written contracts with customers.
- d) Copies of invoices

- 3.6 The Council may require applicants to provide any additional documentation as reasonably necessary to allow the Council to make an informed decision. Where such documentation is not provided to the satisfaction of the Council the application will be refused.
- 3.7 Where an application is granted and a vehicle is exempted from displaying its external identification plate an exemption notice will issued as soon as practical after the decision is made.
- 3.8 Where a vehicle is exempted from the requirement to display an external identification plate the vehicle will NOT be exempted from the need to display the internal plate.
- 3.9 Irrespective of when an exemption notice is granted the initial exemption notice will expire on the same day as the expiration of the vehicles current Private Hire licence, unless it is otherwise surrendered or revoked. Thereafter any renewed exemption notice will last for a period that is the same as that vehicle's Private Hire licence unless either the licence or notice is otherwise surrendered or revoked.
- 3.10 Exemption notices may be renewed annually. An application to renew the exemption must be accompany the vehicle renewal application form.
- 3.11 The Authority to determine any application for an exemption notice is by virtue of this Policy delegated to the Licensing Manager.
- 3.12 Other than where to do so would conflict with the requirements of this Policy, all vehicles granted an exemption notice must, in addition to the requirements of this Policy, comply with the requirements for Private Hire vehicles contained within the Private Hire Vehicle licence conditions.
- 3.13 The below conditions apply to all Private Hire Vehicles granted an exemption from displaying identification plates and are in addition to the criteria and general conditions applicable to all Private Hire Vehicles;
- a) The valid Private Hire Vehicle plates issued to the licence holder shall be kept within the vehicle at all times and shall be produced for inspection by an authorised officer of North Somerset Council or a Police Officer upon request.
 - b) The exemption notice shall be retained within the vehicle at all times and shall be produced for inspection by an authorised officer of North Somerset Council or a Police Officer upon request.
 - c) In the event of loss or damage rendering such plate or notice unserviceable the proprietor shall make immediate application for a replacement for which a fee is payable.
 - d) The proprietor will not display in, on or from the vehicle any advertisement, signage, logos or insignia advertising the operating company or the vehicle's status as a Private Hire vehicle.
 - e) During the period of the exemption notice, the driver shall not be required to wear a Private Hire Driver's identification badge but will have it available for immediate inspection by an authorised officer of North Somerset Council or any Police Officer on request.
 - g) Failure to comply with the above terms will invalidate the exemption granted with immediate effect.

- h) These terms shall remain valid for the term of the notification unless replaced by a different scheme or system of identification.
- i) The exemption will cease to have effect on selling or transferring the vehicle to another party. The exemption notice must be returned to the Council along with the Private Hire vehicle identification plates unless being sold to for use as a Private Hire Vehicle in North Somerset; in which case, only the exemption notice must be returned.
- j) A taximeter will not be installed in the vehicle.
- k) During the period of exemption, the driver is required to comply with the dress code previously supplied to the Council.
- l) The proprietor shall notify the Council of any change in the use of the vehicle by the end of the following working day.

3.14 The below conditions apply to all Private Hire Operators who operate vehicles to which an exemption from display of plates has been granted. These conditions are in addition to the general conditions applicable to all Private Hire Operators;

- a) Bookings taken in respect of clients who require vehicles exempt from the display of plates must be paid for on account. No payment can be made to the driver of the vehicle at time of hiring.
- b) Bookings in respect of clients who on occasion require vehicles exempt from the display of plates must be subdivided into those which;
 - i) Require vehicle to be exempt from display of plates
 - ii) Do not require vehicles exempt from the display of platesCopies of records detailing the division of work to be kept for 12 months from period of Hire and must be provided to the Council on request.
- c) Copies of contracts with clients who require vehicles exempt from the display of plates must be kept for 12 months from date of commencement and provided to the Council on request.
- d) Dress code commensurate with executive work (suit/jacket or equivalent) to be in place in relation to bookings taken for vehicles exempt from the display of plates. Drivers of such vehicles to be required by the operator to comply with the dress code during the Hire period.

Closed Circuit Television Systems (CCTV) - Appendix I

1. No CCTV system shall be installed in a vehicle unless it has been approved by the Licensing Authority.
2. Where fitted, the CCTV system must comply with the minimum specification set out below.
3. Any vehicle in which a CCTV system is installed must display prominently in each compartment of the vehicle where it can be easily read by all passengers a notice stating that a CCTV system is operating in the vehicle. The driver must make visually impaired passengers aware that CCTV is in operation.
4. CCTV cameras, where fitted, must be located in positions where they do not interfere with the driver's field of vision or can be tampered with by a passenger.
5. The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system, where fitted, is regularly maintained and serviced by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Written records of all maintenance and servicing shall be retained by the proprietor for a minimum of 12 months and shall be made available for inspection at the request of a police officer or authorised officer of the Authority.
6. Upon request for image retrieval by a police officer or an authorised officer of the Authority, the proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system and any recorded images are made available as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than five days of the request.
7. The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that any driver of the vehicle is given proper instruction in the use of the CCTV system and the need to comply with the relevant conditions of licence.
8. The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that notification is made to the Information Commissioner to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.
9. The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system is operated in accordance with the current CCTV Code of Practice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Specification for In-car CCTV Systems

10. The system shall, as a minimum:
 - a) be capable of date and time system identification stamping
 - b) be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of seven days
 - c) be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, must be of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and be of such quality that they can be used for the purposes of prosecution,
 - d) be capable of storing images in a manner which prevents them being removed, downloaded or viewed by the driver of the vehicle, a passenger in the vehicle or by any other unauthorised person
 - e) Provide that images are only capable of being downloaded by the system administrator
 - f) provide that the data unit is stored separately from the camera(s) and out of sight of the person travelling in the vehicle
 - g) provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock and vibration.
 - h) ensure that any area recorded by the camera does not extend outside the vehicle
 - i) be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification) which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

NON-MOTORISED TAXIS

1. In order to determine if a non-motorised vehicle is suitable for licensing, the Council will require the following documentation:
 - a) Every non-motorised vehicle must comply, where practicable, with:
 - The Pedal Cycle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1983
 - The Pedal Bicycle (Safety Regulations) 2003.
 - Non-motorised vehicles must comply with the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989 and in addition,
 - b) Applicants must provide a valid certificate of public liability insurance with minimum of £5 million to meet any potential insurance claims.
2. Because of the unusual design and construction of non-motorised vehicles, some of the Council's standard regulations and conditions attached to a vehicle licence may not be applicable or appropriate. The Authority may, at its discretion, exempt applicants from such requirements. The Authority may attach such conditions to the licence as it considers appropriate for the health, safety and welfare of the public. Each application will be considered on its individual merits.
3. The Council will not permit any licence granted to a non-motorised vehicle to be transferred to a motorised vehicle.
4. Any person wishing to drive a licensed non-motorised vehicle must apply to the Council for a Taxi driver Licence.
5. Because of the unusual design and construction of non-motorised vehicles, some of the Authority's standard regulations and conditions attached to a Taxi Driver's Licence may not be applicable or appropriate. The Authority may, at its discretion, exempt applicants from such requirements. The Authority may attach such conditions to the licence as it considers appropriate for the health, safety and welfare of the public. Each application will be considered on its individual merits.
6. The pedicab should be of such a design that has the rider in a forward position and the passengers to the rear. This is to ensure that the rider has a clear view of the road ahead and does not place passengers in a more vulnerable position.
7. Non-motorised vehicles with four or more wheels, must have two front light
8. A minimum of two rear position lights (as Schedule 10 of the Regulations)
9. Any other electrical equipment fitted must be maintained in good condition and be fully functional
10. Tyres must have a clearly visible tread pattern over the entire circumference and over the full breadth of the tyre with no exposed chord. Tyres must also be suitable for the proposed load being carried.
11. Wheels in the vicinity of the passenger compartment must be covered for the

protection of the passengers and their clothing.

12. Non-motorised vehicles will not require a meter to be fitted but must agree a fare before the start of each journey.
13. The vehicle may only be driven by a driver holding a non-motorised vehicle licence issued by this council.
14. The vehicle licence plate issued by the council is to be affixed to the outside at the rear of the vehicle.
15. Any advertising on the vehicle is to conform to the Advertising Standards Agency code.
16. All accidents involving the non-motorised vehicles are to be notified to the council, by the proprietor, within 72 hours.
17. An appropriate first aid kit shall be carried with the non-motorised vehicle whenever it is for Hire.
18. All fixtures and fittings on the non-motorised vehicles are to be well maintained at all times.
19. A certificate from a competent independent cycle mechanic will be required to confirm that the above conditions have been met.
20. The driver should hold either a full DVLA licence for a car or motorcycle or hold CTC (National Standard for Cycle Training) Level 3 and be able to demonstrate competence on the non-motorised vehicle.
21. The driver must also hold an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) disclosure applied for through the Licensing Authority at the time of application. A conviction will not automatically disqualify an applicant but consideration will be given to types of offence and the dates they occurred.
22. Non-motorised vehicles will not be permitted to use the recognised Hackney Carriage ranks provided for motor vehicles.

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

The holder of this licence shall comply with the Provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

1. Conduct of Driver

The driver shall comply with North Somerset Council's licensed driver's code of conduct.

2. Passengers

2.1 The driver shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in a Private Hire vehicle a greater number of persons than that prescribed in the licence for the vehicle

3. Lost Property

3.1 The proprietor or 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.

3.2 The proprietor or driver of a Private Hire vehicle shall, if any property is accidentally left therein by a person who may have been conveyed in the Carriage be found by or handled by him:

3.2.1 Carry it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours, if not sooner claimed by or on behalf of its owner to the office of the Council.

4. Written Receipts

The driver shall if requested by the Hirer of a Private Hire vehicle provide him with a written receipt for the fare paid.

5. Animals

The driver shall not convey in the front of a Private Hire vehicle any animal belonging to or in the custody of himself or the proprietor or operator of the vehicle and he/she will ensure that any animal belonging to or in the custody of any passenger is conveyed in the rear of the vehicle. The driver shall accept guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs at no extra charge.

6. Prompt Attendance

The driver of a Private Hire vehicle shall, if he is aware that the vehicle has been Hired to attend an appointed time and place, punctually attend at that appointed time and place, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause.

7. Deposit of Licence

If the driver is permitted or employed to drive a Private Hire vehicle, of which the proprietor is someone other than himself, he shall, before commencing to drive that vehicle, deposit this licence with the proprietor for retention by him until the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive the vehicle, or any other vehicle of his.

8. Taximeter

If a Private Hire vehicle is fitted with a taximeter the driver shall not cause the fare recorded thereon to be cancelled or concealed until the Hirer has had a reasonable opportunity of examining it and has paid the fare (unless credit is to be given).

9. Fare to be demanded

The driver shall 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 operator or, if the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter and there has been a previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taximeter.

10. Change of Address

The driver shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address, including the name and address of any Company from whom bookings are taken, within 7 days of such a change taking place.

11. Convictions

Within 48 hours of having been cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence the licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of that event and if the Licensing Authority is not notified within the requisite period the licence may be automatically revoked.

12. Change of Medical Circumstances

If the licence holder experiences an adverse change of medical circumstances that will affect his/her ability to perform as a licensed driver, the licence holder shall forthwith notify the Licensing Authority. Failure to notify the Licensing Authority of an adverse change of medical circumstances will render this licence subject to suspension or revocation.

13. Assistance with Passengers Luggage

The driver of a Private Hire vehicle so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by any person hiring or seeking to Hire the vehicle:

- (a) convey a reasonable quantity of luggage;
- (b) afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading;
- (c) afford reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any building, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such a person

14. Return of Badge

The driver shall upon the expiry (without further renewal), revocation or suspension of this licence forthwith return to the Council the driver's badge and licence document issued to him by the council when granting this licence.

15. Insurance

The driver shall produce for inspection, upon request by an authorised Council Officer, a current certificate of insurance or cover note.

16. Revocation and Modification of Conditions

The Council reserves the right, (at its own behest and at any time), to revoke, vary, or modify any of these conditions and/or make such additional conditions as it may deem requisite, either generally or in respect of any licence or occasion.

17. Grievances

By virtue of Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 any person who is aggrieved by a condition attached to a licence may appeal to a Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receipt of the licence.

CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS POLICY

General Principles

1. Legislation specifically identifies offences involving dishonesty, indecency or violence as a concern when assessing whether an individual is 'fit and proper' to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

The Licensing Authority will consider each case on its own merits, and applicants/licensees are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application.

Where a period is given below, it should be taken to be a minimum in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in most cases. This places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain or retain a licence.

2. In relation to cautions, the Licensing Authority shall have regard to the type and age of the offence and the age of the applicant when the offence occurred, when considering their relevance to an application. Cautions given more than 5 years before the date of application shall be treated as irrelevant.
3. In relation to previous convictions, the Licensing Authority shall have regard to the following:
 1. Whether the convictions are spent or unspent;
 2. The type and relevancy of the offences;
 3. The age of the offences;
 4. The apparent seriousness, as gauged by the penalty.
4. The Licensing Manager or Group Service Manager may deal directly with less serious first offences without referring the matter to the relevant Licensing sub-committee. They may choose to take no action or may issue warnings as to future conduct in accordance with this Policy.
5. Applicants and current licensees shall be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee where one or more of the following apply:
 1. Any term of imprisonment or custody;
 2. Any conviction for a sexual offence;
 3. Any conviction for violence or dishonesty which is of a serious nature;
 4. Any serious motoring offence, such as dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, or more than one conviction for drink driving;
6. Each case shall be decided on its own merits.
7. A person with a current conviction for serious crime need not be permanently barred from obtaining a licence but should be expected to remain free of conviction for a **period of time** according to the circumstances 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.

8. The following examples afford a general guide on the action to be taken where convictions are admitted.

Traffic offences

9. Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the granting of a licence. However, applicants with multiple motoring convictions may indicate that an applicant does not exhibit the behaviours of a safe road user and one that is suitable to drive professionally.

Minor motoring offences

10. Convictions for minor offences e.g. obstruction, waiting in a restricted street, speeding etc., should not prevent a person from proceeding with an application.

If sufficient points have been accrued to require a period of disqualification of the applicants DVLA driving licence then a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire drivers licence will not be granted until five years have elapsed since the restoration of the DVLA driving licence. Offences in the five years since restoration will then be taken into consideration.

Holders of council issued drivers licences convicted during the period of licence of such offences may be warned as to future conduct, and any disqualification from driving will lead to an automatic revocation of any Hackney Carriage/ Private Hire drivers licence issued by the council.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

Major motoring offences

11. An isolated conviction for reckless driving or driving without due care and attention etc. may not prevent someone from applying to hold a driver licence with the Authority, provided more than five years have elapsed since the offence.

More than one conviction for this type of offence within the last 5 years should merit refusal and no further application should be considered until a period of 5 years free from conviction has elapsed.

Similarly, any conviction during the period of a council issued licence will lead to a formal review of the licence and repeated offences shall merit consideration of the revocation of that licence.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

Using a hand-held device whilst driving

12. Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs

With a motor vehicle

13. Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed.

In the case of driving under the influence of drugs, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

A licensed driver found guilty of driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall have their council issued drivers licence revoked.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

Not in motor vehicle

14. An isolated conviction for drunkenness may not debar an applicant from gaining a licence. However, a number of convictions for drunkenness could indicate a medical problem necessitating critical examination.

In some cases, a warning would be sufficient. A conviction of this type of offence during the period of a council issued licence could warrant a warning as to future conduct, with subsequent convictions possibly leading to suspension and/or revocation of any licence held.

Drugs

15. Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing for a period at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

Sexual offences

16. Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity, a licence will not be granted. In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any barred list.

A licence holder found guilty of sexual offences during the period of the council issued licence shall have their licence revoked.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

Violence

17. Crimes resulting in death

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

18. Offences involving violence against the person

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

19. Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

A licensed driver found guilty of violence related offences shall have their council issued drivers licence formally reviewed.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

20. Dishonesty

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Any existing driver convicted of offences of dishonesty shall have their licence formally reviewed.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked.

21. Insurance Offences

An isolated incident in the past will not necessarily debar an applicant provided he/she 5 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

A driver found guilty of driving passengers for Hire and reward without the appropriate insurance will have their licence formally reviewed.

No further applications will be entertained from anyone who has previously had a licence revoked

22. Exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list

23. Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

LICENSED DRIVER CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT

To promote its licensing objectives as regards Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing, North Somerset Council has adopted the following Code of Good Conduct, which should be read in conjunction with the other statutory and Policy requirements produced by the Council.

1. Responsibility to the Trade

Licence holders shall endeavor 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, Hackney Carriage Byelaws and the Councils Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy;
- (c) behaving in a civil, orderly, non-discriminatory and responsible manner at all times

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 and other personal effects
- (f) when requested provide receipts to passengers

3. Responsibility to Residents

3.1 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 in vehicle entertainment/music systems 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

3.2 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.

3.3 At Private Hire offices a licence holder shall:

- (a) not undertake servicing or repairs of vehicles;
- (b) not allow their in-vehicle entertainment/music systems 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 to present a professional image to the public;
- (b) wear the badge provided by the Council on his person at all times when in charge of a licensed vehicle, such badge to be worn in a position and manner as to be plainly visible;
- (c) be polite, helpful and fair to passengers;
- (d) unless otherwise directed by the Hirer the driver shall proceed to the destination by the shortest possible route;
- (e) not without the express consent of the Hirer drink or eat in the vehicle;
- (f) not without the express consent of the Hirer play any radio or sound producing instrument or equipment in the vehicle other than for sending or receiving messages in connection with the operation of the vehicle
- (g) drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians and in shall not use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving;
- (h) obey all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all time;
- (i) not to smoke in the vehicle or to allow fare paying passengers to smoke in the vehicle;
- (k) not to carry more passengers in a vehicle than it is licensed to carry.
- (l) not to consume alcohol immediately before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle;
- (m) not drive while having misused legal or illegal drugs;

5. Responsibility of passengers

The Department of Transport (Taxi & Private Hire vehicle licensing: Best practice Guidance 2010), suggests a "Passenger Code of Conduct".

This indicates that the passenger should:

- (a) Treat the vehicle and driver with respect and obey any notices (e.g. in relation eating/smoking within the vehicle),
- (b) Ensure they have enough money to pay the fare before travelling. If wishing to pay by credit card or to stop on route to use a cash machine, check with the driver before setting off.
- (c) Be aware of the fare on the meter and make the driver aware of the limit of their financial resources.
- (d) Be aware that the driver is likely to be restricted by traffic regulations in relation to where he/she can legally and safely stop the vehicle.

PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. STANDARD OF SERVICE

- 1.1 The operator shall 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 The operator must ensure, when a vehicle has been Hired, that it arrives punctually at the appointed place, unless delayed by unforeseen circumstances.
- 1.4 The operator must ensure that premises provided for booking or waiting are kept clean, and are adequately lit, heated and ventilated.
- 1.5 The operator shall also ensure that any waiting area provided has adequate seating facilities, and telephone facilities are in good working order.

2. RECORDS

- 2.1 The records which must be kept by operators under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall be kept in a suitable log or book, the pages of which are numbered consecutively. The records alternatively may be kept on a computer system in a form that can be easily accessed and interrogated by an authorised officer of the Council or a Police Officer.
- 2.2 Prior to each journey, the operator shall record the following particulars of each Private Hire booking:
 10. The date of the booking and time of request
 11. The name of the Hirer and/or passenger
 12. The time of the pick-up
 13. The location of the pick-up
 14. The destination
 15. The time at which the driver was allocated to the booking and the name of the person allocating the booking
 16. The name and licence number of the driver assigned to the booking
 17. The plate number (or other identification) of the vehicle allocated
 18. The name of the person dispatching the vehicle
- 2.3 The operator shall keep a record of the following details in respect of each Private Hire vehicle operated by him/her: -
 1. The vehicles make, model, colour and engine size
 2. The registration number
 3. The vehicle licence number
 4. The number of seats for passengers
 5. Whether a meter is fitted
- 2.4 The operator shall keep a record of the following details in respect of each Private Hire driver employed by him/her: -
 1. Name and current address
 2. Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence Number

3. Date of commencement of employment
4. Date of termination of employment

- 2.5 All records required to be maintained by the operator by these conditions shall be kept for at least 12 months after entry and shall be made available for inspection when requested by an authorised officer of the Council, or a Police Officer.
- 2.5 The Operator shall keep a register of all staff that will take bookings or dispatch vehicles.
- 2.6 The Operator shall keep a record evidencing sight of a basic DBS disclosure check for all booking/dispatch staff. Steps shall be taken by the Operator to confirm that similar and suitable protections are applied by any Company taking a sub-contracted booking.

3. COMPLAINTS

The operator shall notify the Licensing Office in writing of any complaints concerning a contract for Hire arising from his/her business. The notification should be made within 24 hours (or 72 hours if the complaint is received on a weekend) and shall include the action taken or proposed as a result of the complaint made.

4. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The operator shall notify the Licensing Office in writing of any 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 7 days of the change of address.

5. DISCLOSURE OF CONVICTIONS

Within 48 hours of having been cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence the licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of that event and if the Licensing Authority is not notified within the requisite period the licence may be automatically revoked.

6. INSURANCE

- 6.1 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.
- 8.2 Where an operator provides a public office for customers, all areas to which the public are allowed access shall be covered by public liability insurance.

7. PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCES

The operator shall satisfy himself that every driver engaged by him has a valid Private Hire driver's licence issued by North Somerset Council.

8. RETENTION 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 or an authorised officer of the Council.

9. Revocation and Modification of Conditions

The Council reserves the right, (at its own behest and at any time), to revoke, vary, or modify any of these conditions and/or make such additional conditions as it may deem requisite, either generally or in respect of any licence or occasion.

10. Grievances

By virtue of Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 any person who is aggrieved by a condition attached to a licence may appeal to a Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receipt of the licence.

POLICY STATEMENT ON SECURE STORAGE, HANDLING, USE, RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF DISCLOSURES AND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION.

As an organisation using the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS – formerly CRB)) disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, **North Somerset Council – Community & Consumer Services** complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

Storage & Access

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personal file and is always kept separately and securely, in a lockable, non- portable, storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a decision has been made to grant the relevant licence, we do not keep disclosure information any longer than is necessary. It is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding. We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the reason for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of any licensing decision taken.

Taxi Ranks

Clevedon	Vehicle Capacity
Lower Queens Road	3
Portishead	
High Street (opposite precinct)	2
Nailsea	
High Street	1
Weston-super-Mare	
Locking Road (outside Tesco)	14
High Street (Outside TJ Hughes)	3
High Street (Outside TJ Hughes) 10pm-5am Fri & Sat only	6
Princess Royal Square (outside Grand Central)	6
Waterloo Street	7
Total	42

PROOF OF IDENTITY

1. North Somerset District Council may not grant a Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire Licence to any person who is not able to provide proof of their right to work.
2. **Authorisation to Work in the United Kingdom**
 - 2.1 All applicants will need to demonstrate that they have the right to work in the UK before an application for the grant of a licence may be considered. The Licensing Authority will operate its application procedures in line with guidance issued by UK Home Office.
 - 2.2 Further information can be obtained from this Council and from the Home Office website. Identification documents may be copied and forwarded to the Home Office for verification.
3. **Right to live and work in the United Kingdom**
 - 3.1 All applicants for a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver's licence must provide documentary evidence confirming their right to live and work in the United Kingdom.
 - 3.2 The UK Home Office has produced a list of documents that can provide this evidence. These are listed below. Documents provided from List A establish that the person has a permanent right to remain in the UK; documents from List B indicate that the person has a temporary right to be in the UK. A copy of every document produced will be kept by the Authority.
 - 3.3 The provision of a National Insurance number in isolation is not sufficient for the purposes of establishing the right to live and work in the UK. The National Insurance number can only be used for this purpose when presented in combination with one of the documents listed below.
 - 3.4 Licences granted to drivers whose leave to remain in the UK is time-limited will only be granted for up to the period for which they are entitled to work in the UK. Driver licences can only be issued for either 1 or 3 years and each case will be considered individually. For the licence to be extended (up to the maximum three years) drivers must produce further evidence to prove that they have the right to work in the UK.
 - 3.5 In the event of an existing driver who is wishing to renew their licence, the proof of right to work in the UK must be provided before the licence can be renewed. If it is not provided, the licence will not be renewed and the driver will not be licensed. However, if the licence holder is then able to submit the proof of right to work within three months of the initial expiry of the licence, subject to there being no other concerns, the licence will be reinstated and treated as a renewal application. However, any driver submitting this evidence more than three months after the expiry of the initial licence will not be afforded this privilege. In such cases the driver will be treated as a new application, requiring a new medical examination and all other documentation and checks that would be required when applying for a new licence. The applicant will be required to wait until all necessary checks have been completed before a licence can be issued.

- 3.6 If a driver does not have his licence extended, he will, on request, be entitled to a refund of a pro-rata proportion of the grant of licence fee.

List A

Documents which establish ongoing entitlement to work in the UK. These documents prove that an applicant has no restrictions on right to work in the UK. Once an applicant/licence holder has undertaken the necessary check one, they will not have to repeat the check when they subsequently apply to renew their licence.

1. A passport showing that the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a British citizen or a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies having the right of abode in the United Kingdom.
2. A passport or national identity card showing that the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a national of the European Economic Area or Switzerland.
3. A Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office to a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
4. A Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office to the family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
5. A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom.
6. A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, has the right of abode in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom.
7. A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
8. A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the United Kingdom which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
9. A birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
10. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

List B

Documents which indicate restricted entitlement to work in the UK. Applicants or licence holders may be issued with a licence but this will not exceed their date of permission to work. Licence holders will have to provide proof of right to work each time they apply to renew their licence.

1. A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the United Kingdom and is allowed to do the type of work in question.
2. A Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the person named in it can stay in the United Kingdom and is allowed to do the work in question.
3. A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.
4. A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the United Kingdom, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
5. A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18A (2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is **less than 6 months** old **together with Verification** from the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit. The licence may be granted for six months from the date of the Certificate of Application.
6. A **Verification** issued by the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit to you, which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK because they have an in time application, appeal or administrative review and which is outstanding. The licence may be issued for six months from the date of the licence decision.

Additional requirements for applicants who have lived outside the UK

These additional requirements do not relate to the Immigration Act 2016 but are necessary to ascertain whether a driver is a "fit and proper" person to hold a licence.

Where an applicant has lived outside of the UK for any period exceeding 3 months at any time between the age of 10 years old and the date of their driver application then in addition to the Disclosure and Barring Service check, the applicant will be required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct or a criminal record check from each and every country in which they have lived for over 3 months. It may also be possible to get such a check through the relevant embassy in the UK and the applicant will be responsible for providing this at their own expense.

Non-UK applicants, as part of the licensing process must register their non-UK driving licences with the DVLA in order that a UK counterpart can be issued.



Department
for Transport

Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is evidence to support the view that taxis and private hire vehicles are a high-risk environment. In terms of risks to passengers, this can be seen in abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults facilitated and in some cases perpetrated by the trade and the number of sexual crimes reported which involve taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Links between the trade and child sexual abuse and exploitation have been established in many areas and other investigations continue. Data on reported sexual assaults by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers evidence the risk to passengers; data from [Greater Manchester](#) and [Merseyside](#) suggest that, if similar offence patterns are applied across England, 623 sexual assaults per year are reported. These figures do not however account for the under reporting of crime which is estimated to be as high as 83 percent in the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
- 1.2 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. For the purposes of this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday; and the term “vulnerable individual” has the same meaning as the definition of a ‘vulnerable adult’ for the purpose of section 42 of the [Care Act 2014](#), which applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):
- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
 - (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
 - (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- 1.3 Whilst the focus of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards is on protecting children and vulnerable adults, all passengers will benefit from the recommendations contained in it. There is consensus that common core minimum standards are required to regulate better the taxi and private hire vehicle sector, and the recommendations in this document are the result of detailed discussion with the trade, regulators and safety campaign groups. **The Department therefore expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.**
- 1.4 It should be noted that as policing and criminal justice is not a devolved matter, the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 will continue to have effect in Wales although responsibility for taxi and private hire vehicle policy was devolved to the Welsh Assembly in April 2018. Should the Welsh Government introduce legislation to regulate on these issues, the standards in this document would, cease to apply.

- 1.5 All local authorities and district councils that provide children's and other types of services, including licensing authorities, have a statutory duty to make arrangements to ensure that their functions and any services that they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This means that licensing authorities should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes clear whistleblowing procedures, safe recruitment practices and clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children, as set out in the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) statutory guidance.
- 1.6 The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards reflect the significant changes in the industry and lessons learned from experiences in local areas since the 2010 version of the Department's Best Practice Guidance. This includes extensive advice on checking the suitability of individuals and operators to be licensed; safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; the Immigration Act 2016 and Common Law Police Disclosure (which replaced the Notifiable Occupations Scheme).
- 1.7 The standards in this document replace relevant sections of the Best Practice Guidance issued by the Department in 2010, where there is a conflict between the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and the Best Practice Guidance the Department issue on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing, the standards in this document take precedence.

Terminology

Taxis are referred to in legislation, regulation and common language as 'hackney carriages', 'black cabs' and 'cabs'. The term '**taxi**' is used throughout this document and refers to all such vehicles. Taxis can be hired immediately by hailing on the street or at a rank.

Private hire vehicles include a range of vehicles including minicabs, executive cars, chauffeur services, limousines and some school and day centre transport services. All private hire vehicle journeys must be pre-booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator and are subject to a 'triple licensing lock' i.e. the operator fulfilling the booking must use vehicles and drivers licensed by the same authority as that which granted its licence. The term 'private hire vehicle' is used throughout this document to refer to all such vehicles.

2. Consideration of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards

- 2.1 The past failings of licensing regimes must never be repeated. The Department has carefully considered the measures contained in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and recommend that these should be put in to practice and administered appropriately to mitigate the risk posed to the public. The purpose of setting standards is to protect children and vulnerable adults, and by extension the wider public, when using taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 2.2 The Government set out in the [Modern Crime Prevention Strategy](#) the evidence that where Government, law enforcement, businesses and the public work together on prevention, this can deliver significant and sustained cuts in certain crimes. That is good news for victims and communities and it makes clear economic sense too. Educating the public on the risks of using unlicensed drivers and vehicles, how to identify the licensed trade and appropriate measure to take when using these services will protect help all passengers, more information is annexed to this document (Annex - Staying safe: guidance for passengers).
- 2.3 The Strategy committed to protect children and young people from the risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE), by working with local authorities to introduce rigorous taxi and private hire vehicle licensing regimes. Both the [Jay](#) and [Casey](#) reports on CSAE highlighted examples of taxi/private hire vehicle drivers being directly linked to children that were abused, including instances when children were picked up from schools, children's homes or from family homes and abused, or sexually exploited.
- 2.4 The Casey Report made clear that weak and ineffective arrangements for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing had left the children and public at risk. The Department for Transport has worked with the Home Office, Local Government Association (LGA), personal safety charities, trade unions and trade bodies,

holding workshops, forums, and sharing evidence and good practice with local authorities to assist in the setting of the standards.

- 2.5 This document is published by the Secretary of State for Transport under section 177(1) of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 following consultation in accordance with section 177(5).
- 2.6 The document sets out a framework of policies that, under section 177(4), licensing authorities “**must have regard**” to when exercising their functions. These functions include developing, implementing and reviewing their taxi and private hire vehicle licensing regimes. “Having regard” is more than having a cursory glance at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion.
- 2.7 “Having regard” to these standards requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give considerations the weight which is proportionate in the circumstances. **Given that the standards have been set directly to address the safeguarding of the public and the potential impact of failings in this area, the importance of thoroughly considering these standards cannot be overstated.** It is not a question of box ticking; the standards must be considered rigorously and with an open mind.
- 2.8 Although it remains the case that licensing authorities must reach their own decisions, both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters in light of the relevant law, it may be that the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards might be drawn upon in any legal challenge to an authority’s practice, and that any failure to adhere to the standards without sufficient justification could be detrimental to the authority’s defence. **In the interest of transparency, all licensing authorities should publish their consideration of the measures contained in Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, and the policies and delivery plans that stem from these.** The Department has undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of the standards in achieving the protection of children and vulnerable adults (and by extension all passengers).
- 2.9 The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards does not purport to give a definitive statement of the law and any decisions made by a licensing authority remain a matter for that authority.

3. Administering the Licensing Regime

Licensing policies

- 3.1 The Department recommends all licensing authorities make publicly available a cohesive policy document that brings together all their procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This should include but not be limited to policies on convictions, a 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards.
- 3.2 When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public. The importance of ensuring that the licensing regime protects the vulnerable cannot be overestimated. This was highlighted in the [report by Dame Louise Casey CB](#) of February 2015 on safeguarding failings.

“It will be evident from this report that in many cases the activities of perpetrators take place in spheres which are regulated by the Council – taxis have been the focus of particular concern. Persistent and rigorous enforcement of the regulatory functions available to the council, including the placing of conditions on private hire taxi operator licences where appropriate, would send a strong signal that the trade is being monitored and would curtail the activities of opportunistic perpetrators whereby taxi drivers have solicited children to provide sex in return for cigarettes, alcohol or a fare free ride.”

- 3.3 The long-term devastation caused by CSAE was summarised in the same report:

“Victims suffer from suicidal feelings and often self-harm. Many become pregnant. Some have to manage the emotional consequences of miscarriages and abortions while others have children that they are unable to parent appropriately. The abuse and violence continues to affect victims into adulthood. Many enter violent and abusive relationships. Many suffer poor mental health and addiction.”

- 3.4 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council ('Rotherham Council') provides an example of how the systematic review of policies and procedures and the implementation of a plan to drive improvements in practice can result in a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector that is rebuilding local confidence in the industry. The history of past failings here and elsewhere is well known, but it is the transparency and resolution that Rotherham Council has demonstrated and the high standards they now require that are rebuilding public confidence.
- 3.5 One of the key lessons learned is that it is vital to review policies and reflect changes in the industry both locally and nationally. **Licensing authorities should review their licensing policies every five years, but should also consider interim reviews should there be significant issues arising in their area, and their performance annually.**

Duration of licences

- 3.6 A previous argument against issuing licences for more than a year was that a criminal offence might be committed, and not notified, during this period; this can of course also be the case during the duration of a shorter licence. This risk can be mitigated for drivers by authorities to undertaking regular interim checks. To help authorities monitor licensees' suitability, licensing authorities should engage with their police force to ensure that when the police believe a licensee presents a risk to the travelling public they use their Common Law Police Disclosure powers (see paragraphs 4.9 - 4.11) to advise them.
- 3.7 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) sets a standard length at three years for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers and five years for private hire vehicle operators. Any shorter duration licence should only be issued when the licensing authority thinks it is appropriate in the specific circumstances of the case, if a licensee has requested one or where required (e.g. when the licence holder's leave to remain in the UK is time-limited) or when the licence is only required to meet a short-term demand; they should not be issued on a 'probationary' basis.

Whistleblowing

- 3.8 It is in the application of licensing authority's policies (and the training and raising of awareness among those applying them) that protection will be provided. Where there are concerns that policies are not being applied correctly, it is vital that these can be raised, investigated and remedial action taken if required. **Licensing authorities should have effective internal procedures in place for staff to raise concerns and for any concerns to be dealt with openly and fairly.**

A report into the licensing of drivers by South Ribble Borough Council highlights the implications of not applying the agreed policies. In early August 2015, concerns were raised regarding decisions to renew the licences of drivers where there were potential incidents of child sexual exploitation. An internal review concluded that there had been failings in local investigatory procedures which might have affected the ability of the General Licensing Committee to make proper decisions, and information sharing with the police and data recording was not satisfactory.

- 3.9 The external investigation in South Ribble concluded “that there had been a lack of awareness and priority given to safeguarding and the safety of taxi [and private hire vehicle] passengers in the manner in which licensing issues were addressed”. We are pleased to note that the [report](#) concludes, “The Council have been active at every stage in responding to issues and concerns identified. It has taken steps to address operational issues in the licensing function and has engaged fully with other agencies in so doing. In the light of the above, it is not necessary to make any further recommendations.”
- 3.10 It is hoped that all licensing authorities will have learnt from these mistakes but to prevent a repeat, **local authorities should ensure they have an effective ‘whistleblowing’ policy and that all staff are aware of it.** If a worker is aware of, and has access to, effective internal procedures for raising concerns then ‘whistleblowing’ is unlikely to be needed.
- 3.11 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), commonly referred to as whistleblowing legislation, provides protection for those that have a reasonable belief of serious wrongdoing, including failure to comply with professional standards, council policies or codes of practice/conduct. The PIDA is part of employment law. In the normal course of events, if a worker reveals information that his employer does not want revealed it may be a disciplinary offence. If someone leaked their employer’s confidential information to the press, they might expect to be dismissed for that. The PIDA enables workers who ‘blow the whistle’ about wrongdoing to complain to an employment tribunal if they are dismissed or suffer any other form of detriment for doing so. It is a qualified protection and certain conditions would have to be met for the worker to be protected. More information is available online for [employees](#) and [employers](#).

Consultation at the local level

- 3.12 Licensing authorities should consult on proposed changes in licensing rules that may have significant impacts on passengers and/or the trade. Such consultation should include not only the taxi and private hire vehicle trades but also groups likely to be the trades’ customers. Examples are groups representing disabled people, Chambers of Commerce, organisations with a wider transport interest (e.g. the Campaign for Better Transport and other transport providers), women’s groups, local traders, and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It may also be helpful to consult with night-time economy groups (such as Pubwatch) if the trade is an important element of dispersal from the local night-time economy’s activities.
- 3.13 Any decision taken to alter the licensing regime is likely to have an impact on the operation of the taxi and private hire vehicle sector in neighbouring areas; and **licensing authorities should engage with these areas to identify any concerns and issues that might arise from a proposed change.** Many areas convene regional officer consultation groups or, more formally, councillor liaison meetings; this should be adopted by all authorities.

Changing licensing policy and requirements

- 3.14 **Any changes in licensing requirements should be followed by a review of the licences already issued.** If the need to change licensing requirements has been identified, this same need is applicable to those already in possession of a licence. That is not however to suggest that licences should be automatically revoked overnight, for example if a vehicle specification is changed it is proportionate to allow those that would not meet the criteria to have the opportunity to adapt or change their vehicle. The same pragmatic approach should be taken to driver licence changes - if requirements are changed to include a training course or qualification, a reasonable time should be allowed for this to be undertaken or gained. The implementation schedule of any changes that affect current licence holders must be transparent and communicated promptly and clearly.
- 3.15 Where a more subjective change has been introduced, for example an amended policy on previous convictions, a licensing authority must consider each case on its own merits. Where there are exceptional, clear and compelling reasons to deviate from a policy, licensing authorities should consider doing so. Licensing authorities should record the reasons for any deviation from the policies in place.

4. Gathering and Sharing Information

- 4.1 Licensing authorities must consider as full a range of information available to them when making a decision whether to grant a licence and to meet their ongoing obligation to ensure a licensee remains suitable to hold a licence.

The Disclosure and Barring Service

- 4.2 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales. The DBS also maintains the lists of individuals barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults. The DBS makes independent barring decisions about people who have harmed, or where they are considered to pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person within the workplace. The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer employment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves vulnerable groups including children.
- 4.3 Enhanced certificates with a check of the barred lists include details of spent and unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC), any additional information which a chief officer of police believes to be relevant and ought to be disclosed, as well as indicating whether the individual is barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults. Spent convictions and cautions are disclosed on standard and enhanced certificates according to rules set out in legislation. Convictions which resulted in a custodial sentence, and convictions or cautions for a specified serious offence such as those involving child sexual abuse will always be disclosed on a standard or enhanced certificate. Full details of the disclosure rules, and those offences which will always be disclosed, are available from the [DBS](#). As well as convictions and cautions, an enhanced certificate may include additional information which a chief police officer reasonably believes is relevant and ought to be disclosed. Chief police officers must have regard to the [statutory guidance](#) issued by the Home Office when considering disclosure. A summary of the information provided at each level of DBS checks is annexed to this document (Annex – Disclosure and Barring Service information).
- 4.4 It should be noted that licensing authorities must not circumvent the DBS process and seek to obtain details of previous criminal convictions and other information that may not otherwise be disclosed on a DBS certificate. Whilst data protection legislation (not just the Data Protection Act 2018 or General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) gives individuals (or data subjects) a 'right of access' to the personal data that an organisation holds about them, it is a criminal offence to require an individual to exercise their subject access rights so as to gain information about any convictions and cautions. This could potentially lead to the authority receiving information to which it is not entitled. The appropriate way of accessing an individual's criminal records is through an enhanced DBS and barred lists check.

The Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service

- 4.5 Subscription to the DBS Update Service allows those with standard and enhanced certificates to keep these up to date online and, with the individual's consent, allows nominees to check the status of a certificate online at any time. Subscription to the service removes the need for new certificates to be requested, reduces the administrative burden and mitigates potential delays in relicensing.
- 4.6 The DBS will search regularly to see if any relevant new information has been received since the certificate was issued. The frequency varies depending on the type of information; for criminal conviction and barring information, the DBS will search for updates on a weekly basis. For non-conviction information, the DBS will search for updates every nine months.
- 4.7 Licensing authorities are able to request large numbers of status checks on a daily basis. The DBS has developed a Multiple Status Check Facility (MSCF) that can be accessed via a web service. The MSCF enables organisations to make an almost unlimited number of Status Checks simultaneously. Further information on the MSCF is available from the [DBS](#).
- 4.8 Should the MSCF advise that new information is available the DBS certificate should no longer be relied upon and a new DBS certificate requested.

Common Law Police Disclosure

- 4.9 The DBS is not the only source of information that should be considered as part of a fit and proper assessment for the licensing of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Common Law Police Disclosure ensures that where there is a public protection risk, the police will pass information to the employer or regulatory body to allow them to act swiftly to mitigate any danger.
- 4.10 Common Law Police Disclosure replaced the Notifiable Occupations Scheme (NOS) in March 2015 and focuses on providing timely and relevant information which might indicate a public protection risk. Information is passed on at arrest or charge, rather than on conviction which may be some time after, allowing any measures to mitigate risk to be put in place immediately.
- 4.11 This procedure provides robust safeguarding arrangements while ensuring only relevant information is passed on to employers or regulatory bodies. **Licensing authorities should maintain close links with the police to ensure effective and efficient information sharing procedures and protocols are in place and are being used.**

Licensee self-reporting

- 4.12 Licence holders should be required to notify the issuing authority within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence. An arrest for any of the offences within this scope should result in a review by the issuing authority as to whether the licence holder is fit to continue to do so. This must not

however be seen as a direction that a licence should be withdrawn; it is for the licensing authority to consider what, if any, action in terms of the licence should be taken based on the balance of probabilities. Should an authority place an obligation on licensees to notify under these circumstances, authorities should also ensure appropriate procedures are in place to enable them to act in a suitable timeframe if and when needed.

- 4.13 Importantly, a failure by a licence holder to disclose an arrest that the issuing authority is subsequently advised of might be seen as behaviour that questions honesty and therefore the suitability of the licence holder regardless of the outcome of the initial allegation.

Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Police

- 4.14 In some circumstances it may be appropriate under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for licensing authorities to make referrals to the DBS. **A decision to refuse or revoke a licence as the individual is thought to present a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, should be referred to the DBS.** The power for the licensing authority to make a referral in this context arises from the undertaking of a safeguarding role. Further guidance has been provided by the [DBS](#).

- 4.15 The Department recommends that licensing authorities should make a referral to the DBS when it is thought that:

- an individual has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- an individual has satisfied the '[harm test](#)'; or
- received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;
- the person they are referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity;

if the above conditions are satisfied, the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list.

- 4.16 These referrals may result in the person being added to a barred list and enable other licensing authorities to consider this should further applications to other authorities be made. Further information on referrals to DBS is [available](#).

Working with the Police

- 4.17 The police are an invaluable source of intelligence when assessing whether a licensing applicant is a 'fit and proper' person. It is vital that licensing authorities have a partnership with the police service to ensure that appropriate information is shared as quickly as possible. As part of building an effective working relationship between the licensing authority and the police, **action taken by the licensing authority as a result of information received should be fed-back to the police.** Increasing the awareness among police forces of the value licensing authorities place on the information received, particularly on non-conviction intelligence, will assist furthering these relationships and reinforce the benefits of greater sharing of information.
- 4.18 This relationship can be mutually beneficial, assisting the police to prevent crime. The police can gain valuable intelligence from drivers and operators, for example, the identification of establishments that are selling alcohol to minors or drunks, or the frequent transportation of substance abusers to premises.
- 4.19 To aid further the quality of the information available to all parties that have a safeguarding duty, a revocation or refusal on public safety grounds should also be advised to the police.

Sharing licensing information with other licensing authorities

- 4.20 As has been stated elsewhere in this document, obtaining the fullest information minimises the doubt as to whether an applicant or licensee is 'fit and proper'. An obvious source of relevant information is any previous licensing history. **Applicants and licensees should be required to disclose if they hold or have previously held a licence with another authority. An applicant should also be required to disclose if they have had an application for a licence refused, or a licence revoked or suspended by any other licensing authority.** Licensing authorities should explicitly advise on their application forms that making a false statement or omitting to provide the information requested may be a criminal offence.
- 4.21 The LGA's Councillors' [Handbook on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#) advises that those responsible for licensing should "*communicate regularly with licensing committees and officers in neighbouring councils to ensure critical information is shared and that there is a consistency and robustness in decision-making. By working together, local government can make sure that this vital service is safe, respected, and delivering for local communities.*". While this approach may aid consistency and robustness in decision-making within regions, it has obvious inherent limitations as it is unlikely such protocols could be established between all licensing authorities. The LGA commissioned the National Anti-Fraud Network to develop a national register of taxi and private hire vehicle driver licence refusals and revocations (the register is known as 'NR3'). **Tools such as NR3 should be used by licensing authorities to share information on a more consistent basis to mitigate the risk of non-disclosure of relevant information by applicants.**

- 4.22 For these processes to be beneficial, all licensing authorities must keep a complete and accurate record as to the reasons for refusal, suspension or revocation of a licence in order that this might be shared if requested and appropriate to do so.
- 4.23 Data protection legislation provides exemption from the rights of data subjects for the processing of personal data in connection with regulatory activities. This includes taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. The exemption applies only to information processed for the core regulatory activities of appropriate organisations; it may not be used in a blanket manner. The exemption applies only to the extent that the application of the rights of data subjects to the information in question would be likely to prejudice the proper discharge of the regulatory functions. The Information Commissioner's Office has published [guidance](#) to assist organisations to fully understand their obligations and suggest good practice.
- 4.24 If notification under paragraph 4.20 or 4.21 of a refused or revoked licence is disclosed, the relevant licensing authority should be contacted to establish when the licence was refused, suspended or revoked and the reasons why. In those circumstances, the relevant licensing authority must consider whether it should disclose any information in relation to the previous decision, consistent with its obligations under data protection legislation. If information is disclosed, it can then be taken into account in determining the applicant's fitness to be licensed. The relevance of the reason for refusing/revoking a licence must be considered. For example, if any individual was refused a licence for failing a local knowledge test, it does not have any safeguarding implications. Conversely, a revocation or refusal connected to indecency would. Licensing authorities should not simply replicate a previous decision, authorities must consider each application on its own merits and with regard to its own policies.
- 4.25 Should a licensing authority receive information that a licence holder did not disclose the information referred to in paragraph 4.20, for example by checking the NR3 register, the authority should consider whether the non-disclosure represents dishonesty and should review whether the licence holder remains 'fit and proper'.

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 4.26 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are a way to improve the safeguarding response for children and vulnerable adults through better information sharing and high quality and timely safeguarding responses. MASHs (or similar models) should operate on three common principles: information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated intervention.
- 4.27 The Home Office report on [Multi Agency Working and Information Sharing](#) recommended that effective multi-agency working still needs to become more widespread. The Children's Commissioner's 2013 [Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups](#) found that both police and local authorities still identified the inability to share information as a key barrier to safeguarding children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

4.28 All licensing authorities should operate or establish a means to facilitate the objectives of a MASH (i.e. the sharing of necessary and relevant information between stakeholders). As has been emphasised throughout this document, one of the most effective ways to minimise the risk to children and vulnerable adults when using taxis and private hire vehicles is to ensure that decisions on licensing individuals are made with the fullest knowledge possible.

Complaints against licensees

4.29 Complaints about drivers and operators provide a source of intelligence when considering the renewal of a licence or to identify problems during the period of the licence. Patterns of behaviour such as complaints against drivers, even when they do not result in further action in response to an individual complaint, may be indicative of characteristics that raise doubts over the suitability to hold a licence. **All licensing authorities should have a robust system for recording complaints, including analysing trends across all licensees as well as complaints against individual licensees.** Such a system will help authorities to build a fuller picture of the potential risks an individual may pose and may tip the 'balance of probabilities' assessment that licensing authorities must take.

4.30 Licensees with a high number of complaints made against them should be contacted by the licensing authority and concerns raised with the driver and operator (if appropriate). Further action in terms of the licence holder must be determined by the licensing authority, which could include no further action, the offer of training, a formal review of the licence, or formal enforcement action.

4.31 To ensure that passengers know who to complain to, licensing authorities should produce guidance for passengers on making complaints directly to the licensing authority that should be available on their website. Ways to make complaint to the authority should be displayed in all licensed vehicles. This is likely to result in additional work for the licensing authority but has the advantage of ensuring consistency in the handling of complaints. Currently, it is more likely that a complaint against a taxi driver would be made directly to the licensing authority whereas a complaint against a private hire vehicle driver is more likely to be made to the operator. An effective partnership in which operators can share concerns regarding drivers is also encouraged.

4.32 Importantly, this approach will assist in the directing of complaints and information regarding the behaviour of drivers who may be carrying a passenger outside of the area in which the driver is licensed to the authority that issued the licence. In order for this to be effective licensing authorities must ensure that drivers are aware of a requirement to display information on how to complain and take appropriate sanctions against those that do not comply with this requirement.

4.33 In terms of investigating complaints CCTV footage of an incident can provide an invaluable insight, providing an 'independent witness' to an event. This can assist in the decision whether to suspend or revoke a licence. The potential benefits of mandating CCTV in vehicles is discussed in paragraphs 7.7 - 7.12.

Overseas convictions

- 4.34 The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas, only foreign convictions that are held on the Police National Computer may, subject to the disclosure rules, be disclosed. Therefore, a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal record where there have been periods living or working overseas; the same applies when an applicant has previously spent an extended period (three or more continuous months) outside the UK. It should however be noted that some countries will not provide an 'Certificate of Good Character' unless the individual has been resident for six months or more
- 4.35 Licensing authorities should seek or require applicants to provide where possible criminal records information or a 'Certificate of Good Character' from overseas in this circumstance to properly assess risk and support the decision-making process (. It is the character of the applicant as an adult that is of particular interest, therefore an extended period outside the UK before the age of 18 may be less relevant. As with all licensing decisions, each case must be considered on its own merits. For information on applying for overseas criminal record information or 'Certificates of Good Character' please see the Home Office [guidance](#).
- 4.36 Where an individual is aware that they have committed an offence overseas which may be equivalent to those listed in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), licensing authorities should advise the applicant to seek independent expert or legal advice to ensure that they provide information that is truthful and accurate.

5. Decision Making

Administration of the licensing framework

- 5.1 A policy is only effective if it is administered properly. The taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions of local councils are non-executive functions i.e. they are functions of the council rather than the executive (such as the Cabinet). The functions include the determination of licence applications, reviews and renewals, along with the attachment of conditions when considered appropriate. The function may be delegated to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer – which should be set out within a clear scheme of delegation. In London the taxi and private hire vehicle licensing function is undertaken by Transport for London.
- 5.2 Licensing authorities should ensure that all individuals that determine whether a licence is issued or refused are adequately resourced to allow them to discharge the function effectively and correctly.

Training decision makers

- 5.3 **All individuals that determine whether a licence is issued should be required to undertake sufficient training.** As a minimum, training for a member of a licensing committee should include: licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of CSAE, disability and equality awareness and the making of difficult and potentially controversial decisions. Training should not simply relate to procedures, but should include the use of case study material to provide context and real scenarios. All training should be formally recorded by the licensing authority and require a signature from the person that has received the training. Training is available from a number of organisations including the Institute of Licensing and Lawyers in Local Government; the LGA may also be able to assist in the development of training packages.
- 5.4 Public safety is the paramount consideration but the discharge of licensing functions must be undertaken in accordance with the following general principles:
- policies should be used as internal guidance, and should be supported by a member/officer code of conduct.
 - any implications of the Human Rights Act should be considered.
 - the rules of natural justice should be observed.
 - decisions must be reasonable and proportionate.
 - where a hearing is required it should be fairly conducted and allow for appropriate consideration of all relevant factors.
 - decision makers must avoid bias (or even the appearance of bias) and predetermination.
 - data protection legislation.

5.5 When a decision maker has a prejudicial interest in a case, whether it be financial or a personal relationship with those involved they should declare their interest at the earliest opportunity; this must be prior to any discussions or votes and, once declared, they must leave the room for the duration of the discussion or vote.

The regulatory structure

5.6 It is recommended that councils operate with a Regulatory Committee or Board that is convened at periodic intervals to determine licensing matters, with individual cases being considered by a panel of elected and suitably trained councillors drawn from a larger Regulatory Committee or Board. This model is similar to that frequently adopted in relation to other licensing matters. To facilitate the effective discharge of the functions, less contentious matters can be delegated to appropriately authorised council officers via a transparent scheme of delegation.

5.7 It is considered that this approach also ensures the appropriate level of separation between decision makers and those that investigate complaints against licensees, and is the most effective method in allowing the discharge of the functions in accordance with the general principles referred to in 5.4. In particular, the Committee/Board model allows for:

- Each case to be considered on its own merits. It is rare for the same councillors to be involved in frequent hearings – therefore the councillors involved in the decision making process will have less knowledge of previous decisions and therefore are less likely to be influenced by them. Oversight and scrutiny can be provided in relation to the licensing service generally, which can provide independent and impartial oversight of the way that the functions are being discharged within the authority.
- Clear separation between investigator and the decision maker – this demonstrates independence, and ensures that senior officers can attempt to resolve disputes in relation to service actions without the perception that this involvement will affect their judgement in relation to decisions made at a later date.

5.8 Avoidance of bias or even the appearance of bias is vital to ensuring good decisions are made and instilling and/or maintaining confidence in the licensing regime by passengers and licensees.

5.9 Unlike officers, elected members are not usually involved in the day to day operation of the service and as such do not have relationships with licence holders that may give the impression that the discharge of a function is affected by the relationship between the decision maker and the licence holder.

5.10 Some licensing authorities may decide to operate a system whereby all matters are delegated to a panel of officers; however, this approach is not recommended and caution should be exercised. Decisions must be, and be seen to be, made objectively, avoiding any bias. In addition, it may be more difficult to demonstrate compliance with the principles referred to above due to the close

connection between the officers on the panel, and those involved in the operational discharge of the licensing functions.

- 5.11 Whether the structure proposed is introduced or an alternative model is more appropriate in local circumstances, the objective should remain the same - to separate the investigation of licensing concerns and the management of the licence process. Regardless of which approach is adopted, **all licensing authorities should consider arrangements for dealing with serious matters that may require the immediate revocation of a licence.** It is recommended that this role is delegated to a senior officer/manager with responsibility for the licensing service.

Fit and proper test

- 5.12 Licensing authorities have a duty to ensure that any person to whom they grant a taxi or private hire vehicle driver's licence is a 'fit and proper' person to be a licensee. It may be helpful when considering whether an applicant or licensee is fit and proper to pose oneself the following question:

Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you allow a person for whom you care, regardless of their condition, to travel alone in a vehicle driven by this person at any time of day or night?

- 5.13 If, on the balance of probabilities, the answer to the question is 'no', the individual should not hold a licence.
- 5.14 Licensing authorities have to make difficult decisions but (subject to the points made in paragraph 5.4) the safeguarding of the public is paramount. All decisions on the suitability of an applicant or licensee should be made on the balance of probability. This means that an applicant or licensee should not be 'given the benefit of doubt'. If the committee or delegated officer is only "50/50" as to whether the applicant or licensee is 'fit and proper', they should not hold a licence. The threshold used here is lower than for a criminal conviction (that being beyond reasonable doubt) and can take into consideration conduct that has not resulted in a criminal conviction.

Criminal convictions and rehabilitation

- 5.15 In considering an individual's criminal record, licensing authorities must consider each case on its merits, but they should take a particularly cautious view of any offences against individuals with special needs, children and other vulnerable groups, particularly those involving violence, those of a sexual nature and those linked to organised crime. In order to achieve consistency, and to mitigate the risk of successful legal challenge, licensing authorities should have a clear policy for the consideration of criminal records. This should include, for example, which offences would prevent an applicant from being licenced regardless of the period elapsed in all but truly exceptional circumstances. In the case of lesser offences, a policy should consider the number of years the authority will require to have elapsed since the commission of particular kinds of offences before they will grant a licence.

- 5.16 Annexed to this document are the Department's recommendations on the assessment of previous convictions (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions). This draws on the work of the Institute of Licensing, in partnership with the LGA, the National Association of Licensing Enforcement Officers (NALEO) and Lawyers in Local Government, in publishing its guidance on determining the suitability of taxi and private hire vehicle licensees.
- 5.17 These periods should be taken as a starting point in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in all cases. The Department's view is that this places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain a licence. Authorities are however reminded that applicants are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application.

6. Driver Licensing

Criminality checks for drivers

- 6.1 Licensing authorities are entitled to request an enhanced criminal record certificate with check of the barred lists from the DBS for all driver licence holders or applicants. The DfT's 2019 [survey of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities](#) shows that all licensing authorities in England and Wales have a requirement that an enhanced DBS check is undertaken at first application or renewal.
- 6.2 All individuals applying for or renewing a taxi or private hire vehicle drivers licence licensing authorities should carry out a check of the children and adult Barred Lists in addition to being subject to an enhanced DBS check (in section x61 of the DBS application 'Other Workforce' should be entered in line 1 and 'Taxi Licensing' should be entered at line 2). All licensed drivers should also be required to evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months. Drivers that do not subscribe up to the Update Service should still be subject to a check every six months.
- 6.3 Driving a taxi or private hire vehicle is not, in itself, a regulated activity for the purposes of the barred list. This means that an individual subject to barring would not be legally prevented from being a taxi or private hire vehicle driver but the licensing authority should take an individual's barred status into account alongside other information available. **In the interests of public safety, licensing authorities should not, as part of their policies, issue a licence to any individual that appears on either barred list.** Should a licensing authority consider there to be exceptional circumstances which means that, based on the balance of probabilities they consider an individual named on a barred list to be 'fit and proper', the reasons for reaching this conclusion should be recorded.
- 6.4 Drivers working under an arrangement to transport children may be working in 'regulated activity' as defined by the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#). It is an offence to knowingly allow a barred individual to work in regulated activity. The [guidance on home-to-school travel and transport](#) issued by the Department for Education should be considered alongside this document. Please see [guidance](#) on driver DBS eligibility and how to apply.

Safeguarding awareness

- 6.5 Licensing authorities should consider the role that those in the taxi and private hire vehicle industry can play in spotting and reporting the abuse, exploitation or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. As with any group of people, it is overwhelmingly the case that those within the industry can be an asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if they are aware of and alert to the signs of potential abuse and know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

6.6 All licensing authorities should provide safeguarding advice and guidance to the trade and should require taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to undertake safeguarding training. This is often produced in conjunction with the police and other agencies. These programmes have been developed to help drivers and operators:

- provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
- recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
- understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

6.7 Since 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) has run a nationwide campaign – *‘Together, we can tackle child abuse’* which aims to increase public understanding of how to recognise the signs to spot and encourage them to report child abuse and neglect. The DfE continues to promote and raise awareness of the campaign materials through its [online toolkit](#), for local authorities, charities and organisations for use on their social media channels.

‘County lines’ exploitation

6.8 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

6.9 Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to transport (and store) drugs and money between locations. Children aged between 15-17 make up the majority of the vulnerable people involved in county lines, but they may also be much younger. We know that both girls and boys are groomed and exploited and offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children exploited by county lines gangs may have vulnerabilities besides their age, such as broader mental health issues, disrupted or chaotic homes, substance misuse issues, being excluded from school or frequently going missing.

6.10 The National Crime Agency’s 2018 county lines threat assessment set out that the national road network is key to the transportation of county lines victims, drugs and cash; with hire vehicles being one of the methods used for transportation between locations.

6.11 Safeguarding awareness training should include the ways in which drivers can help to identify county lines exploitation. Firstly, they should be aware of the following warning signs:

- Children and young people travelling in taxis or private hire vehicles alone;

- travelling at unusual hours (during school time, early in the morning or late at night);
- travelling long distances;
- unfamiliar with the local area or do not have a local accent;
- paying for journeys in cash or prepaid.

6.12 The Home Office is working with partners to raise awareness of county lines and has provided [material](#) to help taxi and private vehicle hire staff to identify victims and report concerns to protect those exploited through this criminal activity.

6.13 Drivers (or any person) should be aware of what to do if they believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk of harm. If the risk is immediate they should contact the police otherwise they should:

- use the local safeguarding process, the first step of which is usually to contact the safeguarding lead within the local authority;
- call Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

Language proficiency

6.14 A lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents, such as policies and guidance, relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and applying this to identify and act on signs of exploitation. Oral proficiency will be of relevance in the identification of potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interaction with others.

6.15 A licensing authority's test of a driver's proficiency should cover both oral and written English language skills to achieve the objectives stated above.

7. Vehicle Licensing

7.1 As with driver licensing, the objective of vehicle licensing is to protect the public, who trust that the vehicles dispatched are above all else safe. It is important therefore that licensing authorities are assured that those granted a vehicle licence also pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity. Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that the vehicles and drivers used to carry passengers are appropriately licensed and so maintain the safety benefits of the licensing regime.

Criminality checks for vehicle proprietors

7.2 Enhanced DBS and barred list checks are not available for vehicle licensing. **Licensing authorities should require a basic disclosure from the DBS and that a check is undertaken annually.** Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC). Licensing authorities should consider whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, meet the ‘fit and proper’ threshold.

7.3 However, it is important that authorities acknowledge that in many cases individuals that license a vehicle may already be licensed as a driver. An authority which undertakes the biannual DBS checks recommended for its drivers should not require those seeking to licence a vehicle to provide a basic DBS check as part of the application process; a basic DBS would not provide any information in addition to that disclosed under the enhanced DBS and barred lists check used for the driver assessment. In these circumstances, the authority should instead rely on the fact that the applicant is considered as fit and proper to hold a driver licence when considering their suitability to hold a vehicle licence. Should the individual cease to hold a driver licence a basic certificate should be required immediately.

7.4 A refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold a vehicle or private hire vehicle operator licence; these decisions must be independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check. DBS certificate information can only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant’s full consent has been given.

7.5 Private hire vehicle operator and vehicle licences may be applied for by a company or partnership; licensing authorities should apply the ‘fit and proper’ test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership. For this to be effective private hire vehicle operators and those to whom a vehicle licence should be required to advise the licensing authority of any change in directors or partners.

7.6 As explained earlier in the context of driver licensing, the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas so other checks must be considered where and applicant has lived or worked overseas (see paragraph 4.34 - 4.36).

In-vehicle visual and audio recording – CCTV

7.7 Government has acknowledged the potential risk to public safety when passengers travel in taxis and private hire vehicles. It is unfortunately the case that no matter how complete the information available to licensing authorities is when assessing whether to issue any taxi or private hire vehicle licence, nor how robust the policies in place are and the rigor with which they are applied, it will never completely remove the possibility of harm to passengers by drivers.

7.8 The Department's view is that CCTV can provide additional deterrence to prevent this and investigative value when it does. The use of CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi/private hire vehicle passengers and drivers by:

- deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime;
- reducing the fear of crime;
- assisting the police in investigating incidents of crime;
- assisting insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents.

7.9 All licensing authorities should consult to identify if there are local circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in vehicles would have either a positive or an adverse net effect on the safety of taxi and private hire vehicle users, including children or vulnerable adults, and taking into account potential privacy issues.

7.10 While only a small minority of licensing authorities have so far mandated all vehicles to be fitted with CCTV systems, the experience of those authorities that have has been positive for both passengers and drivers. In addition, the evidential benefits of CCTV may increase the level of reporting of sexual offences. According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) only 17 percent of victims report their experiences to the police, 28 percent of rape or sexual assault victims indicated that a fear they would not be believed as a factor in them not reporting the crime. The evidential benefits CCTV could provide are therefore an important factor when considering CCTV in vehicles.

7.11 The mandating of CCTV in vehicles may deter people from seeking a taxi or private hire vehicle licence with the intent of causing harm. Those that gain a licence and consider perpetrating an opportunistic attack against a vulnerable unaccompanied passenger may be deterred from doing so. It is however unfortunately the case that offences may still occur even with CCTV operating.

7.12 CCTV systems that are able to record audio as well as visual data may also help the early identification of drivers that exhibit inappropriate behaviour toward passengers. Audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or

drivers) consider it necessary). The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

- 7.13 Imposition of a blanket requirement to attach CCTV as a condition to a licence is likely to give rise to concerns about the proportionality of such an approach and will therefore require an appropriately strong justification and must be kept under regular review. More information and guidance on assessing the impacts of CCTV and on an authority mandating CCTV is annexed to this document (Annex – CCTV guidance).

Stretched Limousines

- 7.14 Licensing authorities are sometimes asked to license small (those constructed or adapted to carry fewer than nine passengers) limousines as private hire vehicles, these vehicles may be used for transport to 'school proms' as well as for adult bookings. It is suggested that licensing authorities should approach such requests on the basis that these vehicles – where they have fewer than nine passenger seats - have a legitimate role to play in the private hire trade, meeting a public demand. It is the Department's view that it is not a legitimate course of action for licensing authorities to adopt policies that exclude limousines as a matter of principle thereby excluding these services from the scope of the private hire vehicle regime and the safety benefits this provides. A blanket policy of excluding limousines may create an unacceptable risk to the travelling public, as it may lead to higher levels of unsupervised operation. Public safety considerations are best supported by policies that allow respectable, safe operators to obtain licences on the same basis as other private hire vehicle operators.
- 7.15 Stretched large limousines which clearly seat more than eight passengers should not be licensed as private hire vehicles because they are outside the licensing regime for private hire vehicles. However, in some circumstances a vehicle with space for more than eight passengers can be licensed as a private hire vehicle where the precise number of passenger seats is hard to determine. In these circumstances, the authority should consider the case on its merits in deciding whether to license the vehicle under the strict condition that the vehicle will not be used to carry more than eight passengers, bearing in mind that refusal may encourage illegal private hire operation.

8. Private Hire Vehicle Operator Licensing

8.1 As with driver licensing, the objective in licensing private hire vehicle operators is to protect the public, who may be using operators' premises and trusting that the drivers and vehicles dispatched are above all else safe. It is important therefore that licensing authorities are assured that those that are granted a private hire vehicle operator also pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity. Although private hire vehicle operators may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that the vehicles and drivers used to carry passengers are appropriately licensed and so maintain the safety benefits of the driver licensing regime.

Criminality checks for private hire vehicle operators

8.2 Enhanced DBS and barred list checks are not available for private hire vehicle operator licensing. **Licensing authorities should request a basic disclosure from the DBS and that a check is undertaken annually.** Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC). Licensing authorities should consider whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, meet the 'fit and proper' threshold.

8.3 However, it is important that authorities acknowledge that in many cases individuals that license as a private hire vehicle operator may already be licensed as a driver. An authority which undertakes the biannual DBS checks recommended for its drivers should not require those seeking a private hire vehicle operator licence to provide a basic DBS check as part of the application process; a basic DBS would not provide any information in addition to that disclosed under the enhanced DBS and barred lists check used for the driver assessment. In these circumstances, the authority should instead rely on the fact that the applicant is considered as fit and proper to hold a driver licence when considering their suitability to hold a vehicle licence. Should the individual cease to hold a driver licence a basic certificate should be required immediately

8.4 Refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold a private hire vehicle operator licence; this decision must be independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check. DBS certificate information can only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

8.5 A private hire vehicle operator licence may be applied for by a company or partnership; licensing authorities should apply the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership. For this to be effective

private hire vehicle operators should be required to advise the licensing authority of any change in directors or partners.

- 8.6 As explained earlier in the context of driver licensing, the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas. Further information on assessing the suitability of those that have spent extended periods in overseas is provided in paragraphs 4.34 - 4.36.

Booking and dispatch staff

- 8.7 Private hire vehicle drivers are not the only direct contact that private hire vehicle users have with private hire vehicle operators' staff, for example a person taking bookings (be it by phone or in person). A vehicle dispatcher decides which driver to send to a user, a position that could be exploited by those seeking to exploit children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore appropriate that all staff that have contact with private hire vehicle users and the dispatching of vehicles should not present an undue risk to the public or the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- 8.8 Licensing authorities should be satisfied that private hire vehicle operators can demonstrate that all staff that have contact with the public and/or oversee the dispatching of vehicles do not pose a risk to the public. **Licensing authorities should, as a condition of granting an operator licence, require a register of all staff that will take bookings or dispatch vehicles is kept.**
- 8.9 Operators should be required to evidence that they have had sight of a Basic DBS check on all individuals listed on their register of booking and dispatch staff and to ensure that Basic DBS checks are conducted on any individuals added to the register and that this is compatible with their policy on employing ex-offenders. DBS certificates provided by the individual should be recently issued when viewed, alternatively the operator could use a '[responsible organisation](#)' to request the check on their behalf. When individuals start taking bookings and dispatching vehicles for an operator they should be required, as part of their employment contract, to advise the operator of any convictions while they are employed in this role.
- 8.10 The register should be a 'living document' that maintains records of all those in these roles for the same duration as booking records are required to be kept, this will enable cross-referencing between the two records. A record that the operator has had sight of a basic DBS check certificate (although the certificate itself should not be retained) should be retained for the duration that the individual remains on the register. Should an employee cease to be on the register and later re-entered, a new basic DBS certificate should be requested and sight of this recorded.
- 8.11 Operators may outsource booking and dispatch functions but they cannot pass on the obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults. Operators should be required to evidence that comparable protections are applied by the company to which they outsource these functions.

8.12 Licensing authorities should also require operators or applicants for a licence to provide their policy on employing ex-offenders in roles that would be on the register as above. As with the threshold to obtaining a private hire vehicle operators' licence, those with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, may not be suitable to decide who is sent to carry a child or vulnerable adult unaccompanied in a car.

Record keeping

8.13 Section 56 of the [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#) requires private hire vehicle operators to keep records of the particulars of every booking invited or accepted, whether it is from the passenger or at the request of another operator. **Licensing authorities should as a minimum require private hire vehicle operators to record the following information for each booking:**

- the name of the passenger;
- the time of the request;
- the pick-up point;
- the destination;
- the name of the driver;
- the driver's licence number;
- the vehicle registration number of the vehicle;
- the name of any individual that responded to the booking request;
- the name of any individual that dispatched the vehicle.

8.14 This information will enable the passenger to be traced if this becomes necessary and should improve driver security and facilitate enforcement. It is suggested that booking records should be retained for a minimum of six months.

8.15 Private hire vehicle operators have a duty under data protection legislation to protect the information they record. The Information Commissioner's Office provides comprehensive on-line guidance on registering as a data controller and how to meet their obligations.

Use of passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) licensed drivers

8.16 PCV licensed drivers are subject to different checks from taxi and private hire vehicle licensed drivers as the work normally undertaken, i.e. driving a bus, does not present the same risk to passengers. Members of the public are entitled to expect when making a booking with a private hire vehicle operator that they will receive a private hire vehicle licensed vehicle and driver. **The use of a driver who holds a PCV licence and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV) such**

as a minibus to undertake a private hire vehicle booking should not be permitted as a condition of the private hire vehicle operator's licence without the informed consent of the booker.

- 8.17 Where a private hire vehicle is unsuitable, for example where a larger vehicle is needed because more than eight passenger seats required or to accommodate luggage, the booker should be informed that a PSV is necessary, and that a PCV licenced driver will be used who is subject to different checks and not required to have an enhanced DBS check.

9. Enforcing the Licensing Regime

9.1 Implementing an effective framework for licensing authorities to ensure that as full a range of information made available to suitably trained decision makers that are supported by well-resourced officials is essential to a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector. These steps will help prevent the licensing of those that are not deemed 'fit and proper' but does not ensure that those already licensed continue to display the behaviours and standards expected.

Joint authorisation of enforcement officers

9.2 Licensing authorities should, where the need arises, jointly authorise officers from other authorities so that compliance and enforcement action can be taken against licensees from outside their area. An agreement between licensing authorities to jointly authorise officers enables the use of enforcement powers regardless of which authority within the agreement the officer is employed by and which issued the licence. This will mitigate the opportunities for drivers to evade regulation. Such an agreement will enable those authorities to take action against vehicles and drivers that are licensed by the other authority when they cross over boundaries. A model for agreeing joint authorisation is contained in the [LGA Councillors' handbook](#).

Setting expectations and monitoring

9.3 Licensing authorities should ensure that drivers are aware of the policies that they must adhere and are properly informed of what is expected of them and the repercussions for failing to do so. Some licensing authorities operate a points-based system, which allows minor breaches to be recorded and considered in context while referring those with persistent or serious breaches to the licensing committee. This has the benefit of consistency in enforcement and makes better use of the licensing committee's time.

9.4 The provision of a clear, simple and well-publicised process for the public to make complaints about drivers and operators will enable authorities to target compliance and enforcement activity (see paragraphs 4.29 - 4.33). This will provide a further source of intelligence when considering the renewal of licences and of any additional training that may be required. It is then for the licensing authority to consider if any intelligence indicates a need to suspend or revoke a licence in the interests of public safety.

Suspension and revocation of driver licences

9.5 Section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides a licensing authority with the ability to suspend or revoke a driver's licence on the following grounds: -

(a) that he has since the grant of the licence—

- (i) been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency or violence; or
- (ii) been convicted of an offence under or has failed to comply with the provisions of the Act of 1847 or of this Part of this Act;
- (aa) that he has since the grant of the licence been convicted of an immigration offence or required to pay an immigration penalty; or
- (b) any other reasonable cause

9.6 Licensing authorities have the option to suspend or revoke a licence should information be received that causes concern over whether a driver is a fit and proper person. Where the licence holder has been served an immigration penalty or convicted of an immigration offence the licence should be revoked immediately. [Guidance for licensing authorities](#) to prevent illegal working in the taxi and private hire vehicle sector has been issued by the Home Office. As with the initial decision to license a driver, this determination must be reached based on the balance of probabilities, not on the burden of beyond reasonable doubt.

9.7 Before any decision is made, the licensing authority must give full consideration to the available evidence and the driver should be given the opportunity to state his or her case. If a period of suspension is imposed, it cannot be extended or changed to revocation at a later date.

9.8 A decision to revoke a licence does not however prevent the reissuing of a licence should further information be received that alters the balance of probability of a decision previously made. The decision to suspend or revoke was based on the evidence available at the time the determination was made. New evidence may, of course, become available later.

9.9 New evidence may be produced at an appeal hearing that may result in the court reaching a different decision to that reached by the council or an appeal may be settled by agreement between the licensing authority and the driver on terms which, in the light of new evidence, becomes the appropriate course. If, for example, the allegations against a driver were now, on the balance of probability, considered to be unfounded, a suspension could be lifted or, if the licence was revoked, an expedited re-licensing process used.

9.10 A suspension may still be appropriate if it is believed that a minor issue can be addressed through additional training. In this instance the licence would be returned to the driver once the training has been completed without further consideration. This approach is clearly not appropriate where the licensing authority believes that, based on the information available at that time, on the balance of probability it is considered that the driver presents a risk to public safety.

Annex – Assessment of Previous Convictions

Legislation specifically identifies offences involving dishonesty, indecency or violence as a concern when assessing whether an individual is 'fit and proper' to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence. The following recommendations to licensing authorities on previous convictions reflect this.

Authorities must consider each case on its own merits, and applicants/licensees are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application. Where a period is given below, it should be taken to be a minimum in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in most cases. The Department's view is that this places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain or retain a licence.

Crimes resulting in death

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

Exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Offences involving violence against the person

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Sexual offences

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity, a licence will not be granted.

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

Dishonesty

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Drugs

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing for a period at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Motoring convictions

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the granting of a licence. However, applicants with multiple motoring convictions may indicate that an applicant does not exhibit the behaviours of a safe road user and one that is suitable to drive professionally.

Any motoring conviction while a licensed driver demonstrates that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously. However, it is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not necessitate the revocation of a taxi or private hire vehicle driver licence providing the authority considers that the licensee remains a fit and proper person to retain a licence.

Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. In the case of driving under the influence of drugs, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

Using a hand-held device whilst driving

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

Annex – Disclosure and Barring Service information

Table 1: Information included in criminal record checks

Information included	Type of check			
	Basic check	Standard DBS check	Enhanced DBS check	Enhanced DBS (including barred list) check
Unspent convictions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unspent cautions ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spent convictions ²	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spent cautions ^{1 & 2}	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional police Information ³	No	No	Yes	Yes
Barred list(s) Information ⁴	No	No	No	Yes

1. Does not include fixed penalty notices, penalty notices for disorder or any other police or other out-of-court disposals.
2. Spent convictions and cautions that have become protected under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975, as amended, are not automatically disclosed on any level of certificate. Further guidance is available [the DBS filtering guide](#).
3. This is any additional information held by the police which a chief police officer reasonably believes to be relevant and considers ought to be disclosed.
4. This is information as to whether the individual concerned is included in the children's or adults' barred lists maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Annex – CCTV Guidance

It is important to note that, in most circumstances, a licensing authority which mandates the installation of CCTV systems in taxis and private hire vehicles will be responsible for the data – the data controller. It is important that data controllers fully consider concerns regarding privacy and licensing authorities should consider how systems are configured, should they mandate CCTV (with or without audio recording). For example, vehicles may not be exclusively used for business, also serving as a car for personal use - it should therefore be possible to manually switch the system off (both audio and visual recording) when not being used for hire. Authorities should consider the Information Commissioner's view on this matter that, in most cases, a requirement for continuous operation is unlikely to be fair and lawful processing of personal data.

The Home Office '[Surveillance Camera Code of Practice](#)' advises that government is fully supportive of the use of overt surveillance cameras in a public place whenever that use is:

- in pursuit of a legitimate aim;
- necessary to meet a pressing need;
- proportionate;
- effective, and;
- compliant with any relevant legal obligations

The Code also sets out 12 guiding principles which, as a 'relevant authority' under section 33(5) of the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#), licensing authorities must have regard to. It must be noted that, where a licence is granted subject to CCTV system conditions, the licensing authority assumes the role and responsibility of 'System Operator'. The role requires consideration of all guiding principles in this code. The failure to comply with these principles may be detrimental to the use of CCTV evidence in court as this may be raised within disclosure to the Crown Prosecution Service and may be taken into account.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) has provided guidance on the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice in its '[Passport to Compliance](#)' which provides guidance on the necessary stages when planning, implementing and operating a surveillance camera system to ensure it complies with the code. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has also published a [code of practice](#) which, in this context, focuses on the data governance requirement associated with the use of CCTV such as data retention and disposal, which it is important to follow in order to comply with the data protection principles. The SCC provides a [self-assessment tool](#) to assist operators to ensure compliance with the principles set out in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The SCC also operate a [certification scheme](#); authorities that obtain this accreditation are able to clearly demonstrate that their systems conform to the SCC's best practice and are fully compliant with the Code and increase public confidence that any risks to their privacy have been fully considered and mitigated.

The [Data Protection Act 2018](#) regulates the use of personal data. Part 2 of the Data Protection Act applies to the general processing of personal data, and references and supplements the General Data Protection Regulation. Licensing authorities, as data controllers, must comply with all relevant aspects of data protection law. Particular attention should be paid to the rights of individuals which include the right to be informed, of access

and to erasure. The ICO has provided detailed [guidance](#) on how data controllers can ensure compliance with these.

It is a further requirement of data protection law that before implementing a proposal that is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of people, an impact assessment on the protection of personal data shall be carried out. The ICO recommends in [guidance](#) that if there is any doubt as to whether a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required one should be conducted to ensure compliance and encourage best practice. A DPIA will also help to assess properly the anticipated benefits of installing CCTV (to passengers and drivers) and the associated privacy risks; these risks might be mitigated by having appropriate privacy information and signage, secure storage and access controls, retention policies, training for staff how to use the system, etc.

It is essential to ensure that all recordings made are secure and can only be accessed by those with legitimate grounds to do so. This would normally be the police if investigating an alleged crime or the licensing authority if investigating a complaint or data access request. Encryption of the recording to which the licensing authority, acting as the data controller, holds the key, mitigates this issue and protects against theft of the vehicle or device. It is one of the guiding principles of data protection legislation, that personal data (including in this context, CCTV recordings and other potentially sensitive passenger information) is handled securely in a way that 'ensures appropriate security', including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

All passengers must be made fully aware if CCTV is operating in a vehicle. Given that audio recording is considered to be more privacy intrusive, it is even more important that individuals are fully aware and limited only to occasions when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary. The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button. As well as clear signage in vehicles, information on booking systems should be introduced. This might be text on a website, scripts or automated messages on telephone systems; the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued guidance on privacy information and the right to be informed on its website.

Annex - Staying Safe: Guidance for Passengers

Licensing authorities should provide guidance to assist passengers in identifying licensed vehicles and the increased risks of using unlicensed vehicles. The guidance might include advice on:

- how to tell if a taxi or private hire vehicle is licensed.

Educate the public in the differences between taxis and private hire vehicles e.g.:

- a taxi can be flagged down or pre-booked.
- a private hire vehicle that has not been pre-booked should not be used as it will not be insured and may not be licensed.
- what a private hire vehicle should look like e.g. colour, signage, licence plates etc.
- the benefit of pre-booking a return vehicle before going out.
- arrange to be picked up from a safe meeting point.
- requesting at the time of booking what the fare is likely to be.

When using a private hire vehicle, passengers should always:

- book with a licensed operator.
- confirm their booking with the driver when s/he arrives.
- note the licence number.
- sit in the back, behind the driver.
- let a third party know details of their journey.

When using a taxi, passengers should where possible:

- use a taxi rank and choose one staffed by taxi marshals if available.