

18 October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on Review of Middlesbrough Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy

The Council are proposing to amend the current Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy in relation to 2 areas – the age policy and the window tint policy for licensed vehicles. These proposed amendments relate to a relaxation of the age limits and the level of light transmission permitted in the rear windows of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles.

Proposed changes to Vehicle Age Policy

The current age policy only permits vehicles to be licensed if they were less than 3 years old when first licensed and to remain licensed until they reach the upper age limit of 8 years (10 years for certain types of wheelchair accessible vehicles).

It is proposed that the age limits be extended to allow vehicles to be licensed upto 5 years old when first licensed and to remain licensed until they reach the upper age limit of 10 years (12 years for certain types of wheelchair accessible vehicles).

Proposed changes to Window Tint Policy

The current Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations for all vehicles operating in the UK requires that the windows on the vehicle allow at least:

- 75 per cent of light transmission through the front windscreen and
- 70 per cent of light transmission through the front side windows

The legislation on tinted windows do not apply the rear windscreen or the rear passenger windows.

However, the Council's current Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy imposes an additional requirement that all rear windows must have a minimum light transmission of 30%.

It is understood that in recent years many vehicle manufacturers have started to introduce privacy glass in the rear passenger windows of vehicles as standard. Many of these vehicles no longer meet the Council's Window Tint Policy and this has led to a number of vehicles failing the Council's Taxi Test. This has resulted in vehicle proprietors having to make a significant financial outlay to replace glass in vehicles in order to meet the Council Taxi Policy standard.

It is proposed that the policy be amended to remove the additional requirement that all rear windows must have a minimum light transmission of 30%.

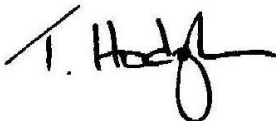
The proposed policy would state:-

'The vehicle must be fitted with glass which is in accordance with current Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations prescribed in respect of the normal zone of vision i.e. the front windscreen 75% light transmittance and the front door windows 70% light transmittance. All remaining windows to the rear of the B pillar may have tint complying to original manufacture specification. No retrospective fitting of tinted windows shall be fitted. No unapproved self-adhesive material (tinted or clear) shall be affixed to any part of the glass'.

These proposals have been considered by Officers and Members of the Council's Licensing Committee who have agreed that the proposed amendments should be consulted with all interested parties.

You are being invited to comment on these proposals. Should you have any comments please submit them in writing to the Licensing Manager, Public Protection Service, PO Box 505, Civic Centre, Middlesbrough, TS1 9FZ or to Licensing@middlesbrough.gov.uk before **29 November 2021**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Hodge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Licensing Manager