



Consultation on proposals to amend the Authority's Licensing Policy, Guidance and Conditions for Private Hire and Taxis Operating Within the Borough of Cheltenham

Consultation Closing Date: 23:59 on 13 April 2025

<https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/consultations>

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Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Council (the authority) previously adopted the [Licensing Policy, Guidance and Conditions for Private Hire and Taxis Operating within the Borough of Cheltenham](#) in 2021 that supports the Licensing Authority in carrying out its responsibilities in administering, monitoring and carrying out enforcement in respect of the taxi and private hire licensing regimes. These responsibilities primarily come from primary legislation, namely the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Police and Town Clauses Act 1847.

As one will note this legislation is quite dated, however the government has produced statutory guidance to support Licensing Authorities in carrying out their functions. The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards was published in July 2020, and the authority has previously taken steps to reflect a number of priorities contained therein.

More recently, the government published an updated version of the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance for Licensing Authorities in England in November 2023. The authority has considered this best practice guidance in reviewing its existing Taxi and Private Hire Policy, and this is reflected in some of the amendments proposed.

A consultation was carried out in Summer 2024, but no further developments took place due to a change in the structure of the licensing team. This is a new 6-week consultation period. If you submitted a comment during the 2024 consultation, please ensure that you respond to this survey to ensure that your views are considered.

IF YOU SUBMITTED COMMENTS DURING THE 2024 CONSULTATION, PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU RESPOND TO THIS CONSULTATION IN ORDER FOR YOUR COMMENTS TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.

How you can respond

This consultation **closes at 23:59 on 13 April (6 weeks)**. There are several ways to respond to this consultation:

- Online using the [electronic consultation form](#)
- By completing and returning this form to licensing@cheltenham.gov.uk or by post to:

Cheltenham Borough Council
Licensing Section
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 9SA

Privacy and Data Protection

The Licensing Consultations Privacy Statement can be found on the authority's website at https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/81/how_we_use_your_data/1375/licensing_privacy_data.

Policy Proposals

This section of the consultation document **outlines the proposed policy changes and amendments that the authority is specifically seeking feedback on** as part of the consultation process.

About You

Name (optional): _Full licensing committee

ANY BLANK SECTIONS ARE ITEMS COMMITTEE GENERALLY AGREE WITH

email address:

Which best describes the capacity in which you are responding to this consultation **(required)**:

- ☐ A councillor/committee member
- ☐ A Member of Parliament
- ☐ A licence holder
- ☐ A customer of the taxi/private hire trade
- ☐ A statutory body (police etc.)
- ☐ A body (for example disability awareness group)
- ☐ Other not specified (please specify): _____

The following proposals were within the consultation that was carried out in summer 2024:

1. Confirmation of the existing requirement to display information to make a complaint in licensed vehicles.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal to display information on how to make a complaint in licensed vehicles? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

DW also believe option to make positive comments should be presented

HP can we make sure this is in plain English for tourists

2. Clarification around DBS checks for new applicants for a driver licence and existing licence holders, namely that only an enhanced level check for 'other workforce' will be accepted and that all drivers must subscribe to the update service through the DBS. Furthermore, that the authority will carry out a check for any changes to such subscriptions on a 6 monthly frequency. **NB This is a requirement under the Department for Transport (DfT) Statutory Standards and Home Office Guidance regarding DBS checks so no views will be sought.**
3. Medical assessment frequency brought into line with DVLA guidelines for bus and lorry drivers and the frequency reduced – see Annex 1 for details.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal regarding medical assessment frequency? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

DW probably inclined to agree – moves on to state we probably agree with everything as its our own policy

4. Vehicles – confirmation of the aspiration for a mixed hackney carriage fleet of WAVs and non – WAVs; confirmation that from 2030 only zero emissions vehicles will be licensed as hackney carriages and confirmation that this is the authority's *aspiration* for the PHV fleet; WAV requirements to be relaxed in the hope of seeing more WAV vehicles licensed as hackneys and PHVs; vehicle emissions standards clarified for existing and new proprietors for hackney carriages and PHVs – the standard being Euro 6 or better and phasing out higher emission emitting vehicles.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal regarding WAVs and emissions? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

DW - Concerns around the same situation as WAV policy – rather than having a hard cut off date – allow drivers to age gracefully off of the fleet

HP – scrapping a perfectly good car does not make sense due to energy consumed in making a new one

Other LA's are not reviewing policies due to the LGR

AB – language proficiency

RP – Euro 6 or better – better is not specified – zero emission capability (hybrid) should be mentioned – diesel is not a preferred option – air quality team should comment and help

5. Confirmation that WAV hackney carriages licensed as such, since first licence, must remain as a WAV.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal regarding WAVs remaining as WAVs? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

6. Clarification on what vehicles must be provided for a temporary replacement.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's clarification on temporary vehicle replacements? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

7. Lessening the burden on vehicle proprietors for hackney carriage taximeter tests by reducing the frequency of these tests.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal on the frequency of taximeter tests? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

8. Lessening the maximum period of time a vehicle test may be carried out before the start date of a new vehicle licence to 1 month.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that vehicle tests can be no more than 1 month old? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree in line with MOT

9. Clarification on roof sign dimensions.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposed roof sign dimensions? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

10. Confirmation that all taximeters in hackney carriages will be required to be calendar controlled.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that meters must be calendar controlled? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

11. Implementation of requirements for a director or person with management responsibility for each PHV operator to have carried out safeguarding training.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that private hire operators must undertake safeguarding training? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Important – anyone involved should do so

12. Clarification of the situations where first aid kits and fire extinguishers should be used.

No views are sought as this is clarification.

13. Implementation of requirement for hackney and PHV proprietors to fit and ensure a card machine or device is available to take card payments, and sanctions for non-compliance without good cause or in certain situations, such as loss of mobile data signal.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that card machines in licensed vehicles will be mandatory? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Yes- one of the biggest bugbears people contact us about. DW suggests council should look into being card provider but not sure if allowed. Make it clear that we require only Visa and Mastercard due to high merchant fees with Amex and not fair on the trade to pay excessive merchant fees. Something offices to look into to check that's still the case

RP – where are fees set for Hackney cards. DW – fare card just been revised, set with cabinet. 4 current fares and additional fares for luggage, extra passengers and soiling etc.

14. Changes proposed to make the medical exemption process less burdensome, whilst ensuring the system remains robust and is not open to abuse.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's amendments to the medical exemption process? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

DW suspect we agree with this

In addition to the proposals above, further proposals since the 2024 consultation are:

15. To remove topographical questions from the knowledge test for private hire drivers.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal to remove topographical questions from the private hire knowledge test? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

SH - asked by a driver if he had postcode of a location. He expects drivers to know where things are

DW – for PH not Hackney, pre-booked only and can look at journey before taking it

16. For private hire operators to notify the licensing team when a driver or vehicle commences/ceases working for them.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

17. CCTV wording updated and the requirement for any vehicle proprietors to notify the licensing team if they have CCTV installed.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the updated CCTV wording and requirement to notify the licensing authority if a system is fitted? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

DW required to keep CCTV for a reasonable amount of time – probably already in conditions.
Frustration that drivers don't have CCTV when there is an alleged incident

MB – wording updated to ensure anyone makes sure that IOC Data Protection is met. Also drivers with CCTV must make LA aware.

(Aside) DW – make sure we don't sleepwalk into vehicles being scrapped in 2030

RP – why are fares set at the level they are set at. Not in policy or survey. Can we take that to county group to determine where fares come from.

MB – legislative process we must go through unique to Cheltenham. Consultation on fare. We propose fares based on inflation. Prior to proposal we had meeting with trade to discuss fares. Proposal made on back of meeting – proposal submitted for consultation.

RP – proposes line to explain how process about fares are determined. How much it costs and why.

18. Update to the enforcement and complaints policy to include strikes.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's amendments to the enforcement and complaints policy? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

19. Lost property to be returned to the owner or taken to a police station within 48 hours.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's update to lost property being returned or taken to a police station? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Agree

20. Private hire operator returns to be submitted monthly (currently quarterly).

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that operator returns are changed from quarterly to monthly? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

SS – what is rationale for this.

MB – Monthly operator returns done quarterly – proposal is to allow council to better track where vehicles and rivers working.

21. Updates to the strike policy.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's amendments to the strike policy? (required)

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

22. Update to specify that insurance write-offs (vehicles that have been involved in accidents and subsequently written off) will not be licensed.

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that insurance write offs should not be licensed? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

23. Amendment to state that individuals who fail the knowledge test will need to wait a period of 6 months until they are permitted to re-sit the test?

Question: Do you agree, or disagree, with the authority's proposal that individuals will have to wait 6 months until they are permitted to re-sit the knowledge test if they have already failed the test 3 times? (required)

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to your answer. **(optional)**

Consultation

The authority believes that the proposals outlined in this consultation document will provide balanced and comprehensive improvement to the way it regulates the taxi and private hire industries.

However, the authority is keen to hear your views on these proposals, and is consulting with the trades it regulates, relevant stakeholders and the wider public.

We will also use the authority website to publicise the consultation taking place and our proposals. An online survey tool to respond to the consultation will be available on our website and in paper form available from the authority reception area at the Municipal Offices.

We will also consult directly with the following groups, organisations or individuals.

- The Cheltenham Borough Authority – Licensing Committee
- The local MP
- Gloucestershire Constabulary
- Gloucestershire School Transport
- Cheltenham Borough Council elected members
- Cheltenham Business and Improvement District (BID)
- Cheltenham Safe
- Disability groups
- Taximeter calibrators

If you have any questions about this consultation, please contact licensing@cheltenham.gov.uk. before making the final decision in respect of these proposals.