

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2022  
title: HACKNEY CARRIAGE SIGNAGE  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: STEPHEN BARKER, SOLICITOR

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of issues in relation to signage for Hackney Carriages, and to seek Committee's views on proposals that might be put out to consultation.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives }
  - Corporate Priorities }
  - Other Considerations }
- The Council aims to be a well-managed Council, supporting the interests of licensees and residents.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Currently, condition 25 of the Council's Hackney Carriage Vehicle conditions reads as follows:

25. A Hackney Carriage must:
- a. be equipped with a roof sign, of a standard size - width 500mm, height 120mm - such sign to be illuminated and bearing the word "TAXI" in black letters on yellow background and facing forward and on the red background facing backwards.
  - b. not save as set out in (a) above, be equipped with roof fittings, including advertisements except a wireless aerial which must be fitted in such a manner as to satisfy the Council;
  - c. have a sign stating 'no smoking' with minimum diameter of 70mm displayed in a visible position inside the vehicle.
  - d. not display any signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, numbers, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices whatsoever on, in or from the vehicle except as may be required by any statutory provision (including bye-laws) or required or permitted by these conditions. This condition does not apply to any indication on a taximeter fitted to the vehicle or to a sign which:
    - i. is displayed in, on or from the vehicle whilst it is stationary;
    - ii. contains no words or numbers other than the name and address of an operator of the vehicle or the name under which he carries on his business and its address;
    - iii. is displayed in pursuance of a prior arrangement made for the carriage of a passenger or passengers named in the sign.

2.2 There is no requirement in relation to signage imposed by either the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 or the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. There is a requirement for a plate to be displayed in each case, but otherwise the issue of what signage is appropriate is a matter for determination by the licensing authority.

2.3 Conditions can include, for example, a requirement for particular livery which may assist the travelling public in identifying a hackney carriage (either traditional black or a more distinctive colour scheme). Similarly, conditions can be imposed in relation to signage. As stipulated in condition 25a, a roof sign must be displayed but, otherwise, condition 25d prohibits other signage except as allowed by the conditions themselves or any statutory provision.

2.4 The corresponding condition in relation to signage for private hire vehicles in the Ribble Valley is set out below by way of comparison:

20. A private hire vehicle must:

- a. not have any lights, plates, signs, advertisements or other fittings, save for those required under conditions or as approved by the Council;
- b. not be equipped with any roof fitting or sign other than a wireless aerial, approved by the Council;
- c. not display the words "Taxi", "Taxi Cab" or "Cab";
- d. display door signs upon its rear doors stating "Private Hire Vehicle", "Advanced bookings only" and "Not insured unless prebooked" only and the lettering within those signs must be in bold black type and not less than 15mm in height. These signs must be displayed on private hire vehicles AT ALL TIMES (including when the vehicle is not in use).
- e. display door signs upon its front doors which shall only include the name of the private hire operator and its telephone number. If the words "Taxi", "Taxi 5 Cab" or "Cab" or "for hire" form part of the Operator's name these must be omitted from the sign; and
- f. display a sign stating "no smoking" with a minimum diameter of 70mm inside the vehicle in a position which is clearly visible to the hirer/passengers.

### 3 ISSUES

3.1 At the Annual Taxi meeting held on 21 September 2022, a private hire vehicle driver and operator commented upon the differences in signage, which he considered might create difficulties for the travelling public. Concern also arises about the activities of drivers of hackney carriages licensed by other authorities, which can be used for private hire purposes only in the Ribble Valley, but who may have plied for hire unlawfully.

3.2 Consideration could, therefore, be given to amendment of the conditions to provide for the introduction of door signage for Ribble Valley licensed hackney carriages. This could, for example, read 'Ribble Valley Licensed Hackney Carriage', with the dimensions and size of writing being specified in a similar manner to the private hire vehicle signage. This would enable the traveling public to be aware that they were using a vehicle that conformed to local licensing requirements and conditions, as well as providing a means of identifying which vehicles are licensed to ply for hire in the Ribble Valley more easily.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – resources may be expended in officer time in carrying out any consultation.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - No implications identified.

- Political - No implications identified.
- Reputation – No implications identified.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

## 5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve the introduction of a requirement for door signage for Hackney Carriages reading “ Ribble Valley Licensed Hackney Carriage”
- 5.2 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consult with licensees on amendment of condition 25 of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle conditions.

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