

REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE - 21 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT BY: LICENSING MANAGER

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**Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy Review
Consideration of options for review of current policy guidelines**

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is for the Licensing Committee to give approval, in principle, for the Head of Health, Safety and Licensing to undertake a thorough review of hackney carriage and private hire policy in respect of drivers, vehicles and private hire operators.

2. Recommendations

- (1) That the Head of Health, Safety and Licensing be authorised to undertake a thorough review of hackney carriage and private hire policy in relation to vehicles, drivers and operators and report back to a future meeting of the Licensing Committee;
- (2) Officers shall meet with recognised hackney carriage and private hire trade representatives, private hire operators and other relevant forums/bodies to discuss any proposed policy initiatives.

3. Background

The proposal to review the current policy guidelines originates from a request by members of the Licensing Committee that the Licensing Manager prepare a report giving options for the review of policy with particular emphasis on the following matters:

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

- Review of hackney carriage vehicle quantity controls;
- Increase in availability and choice of wheelchair accessible vehicles for hackney carriages;
- Provision of CCTV in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles (subject to any appropriate exemptions);
- Review of age limits of licensed vehicles;
- Review of hackney carriage stands within the City.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers

- Satisfactory standard of English comprehension via oral and written examination;
- Knowledge and understanding of currency, highway code etc.;
- Driver disability awareness training;
- Review of procedures and process for checking of applicants;
- Duration of licences for drivers and operators;
- Advanced driver training for new drivers or existing licence holders where valid complaints have been received.

Review of fees and charges

- Ongoing review of fees with a view to total cost recovery

Delegation to Head of Service

- to review and update where necessary licence conditions, forms, procedures, including the points system.

4. Comments from Transport and Environment - Road Safety

In response to a request by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, this report also includes information and comments from the PCC Road Safety Officer in respect of Police/Local Authority casualty records and its correlation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing. The main points are highlighted below:

Road Safety

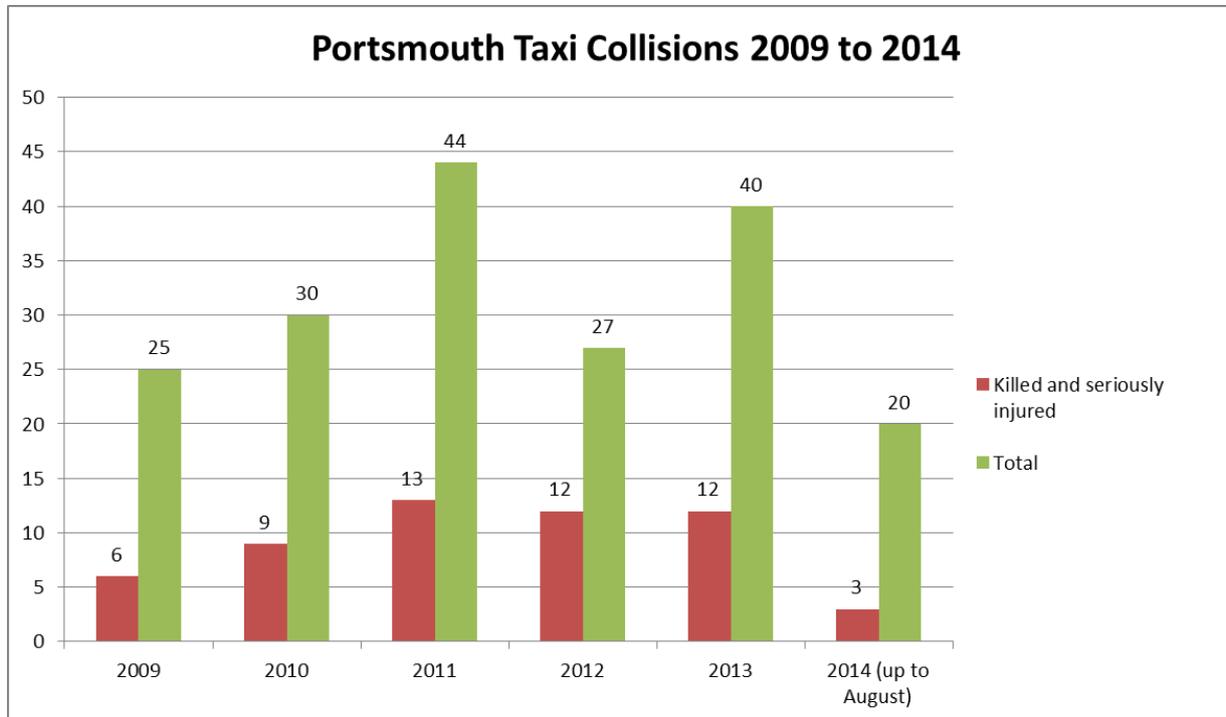
- The following data is all drawn from Stats19 Police/Local Authority casualty record analysis.
- Portsmouth has significantly higher taxi casualties than the rest of Hampshire and vulnerable road users feature heavily.

Overall picture

- Dividing the county into the Policing areas:
- During the four years January 2009 – December 2012 there were 407 personal injury collisions in the area involving taxis and private hire vehicles.
- **61.4% of the collisions occur in the Eastern RPU Area (this includes Portsmouth and Isle of Wight)**
- 24.1% of the collisions occur in the West RPU Area
- 14.5% of the collisions occur in the North RPU Area
- **215 collisions (72 serious, 143 slight) occurred in Portsmouth, this accounts for 41.8% of the 407 collisions Hampshire wide.**
- 76 collisions (15 serious, 61 slight) occurred in **Southampton**, this accounts for 18.7% of the 407 collisions.

- In 70.6% of the collisions in Portsmouth – the Taxi driver had blame for the collision

Portsmouth picture



- Analysis of the most recent stats19 data for Portsmouth 1st September 2011 and 31st August 2014 shows there were a total of 200 collisions (1 fatal, 45 serious and 154 slight).
- 57 (21%) of the collisions are with pedal cycles, 60 (22%) are with pedestrians and 15 (6%) are with motorcycles with the remaining being with other vehicles.

Cycle collisions

- It is clear that cyclists are over represented in this data.
- Cyclists make up only 4.7% of traffic but 21% of Taxi related casualties.
- Taxis/Private Hire represents 0.9% of registered vehicles in Portsmouth (1000 out of a total of 110,000) but represent 8% of total cycle collisions.
- Most common contributory factor is driver failing to look properly.
- Most common manoeuvre is pulling out on cyclists at junctions and roundabouts and opening of doors into their path.

Pedestrian collisions

- Most common contributory factor is driver failing to look properly, although this is followed by pedestrian failed to look and impaired by alcohol.
- Most common manoeuvre is the taxi going straight ahead

Vehicle Collisions

- Most common contributory factors are: failed to look properly and failed to judge other persons path or speed.
- Most common collisions are pulling out at junctions and roundabouts and rear end shunts.

Locations of note

- 82% occur on main 30mph roads
- Taxi casualties are spread widely across the city but four locations are priorities.
- Cosham – Southampton Road to M27
- A2047 – entire length
- Fratton Station (radius of 100 metres from entrance)
- Albert Road entire length

Summary

- As professional drivers, taxi drivers are performing poorly in Portsmouth.
- There is a high percentage of vulnerable road users involved in collisions with Taxis.
- A lack of observation and care at junctions and when driving generally is the prevalent behaviour.

Potential solutions

- Driver testing through the Blue Lamp Trust or DSA for all new drivers– this is tax deductible.
- Review of private hire and hackney carriage licence penalty system including increased penalty points for infringements relating to safety.
- Increase the length of time penalties remain on the driver's record (one year is too short).
- Portsmouth specific licensed driver hazard awareness training for all drivers.
- Double penalty points for incidents involving vulnerable road users when at fault.
- Cap on number of driving licence points on entry.
- Messages inside taxis and private hire vehicles to warn passengers to check for cycles before opening doors.

5. Other Considerations

The last major review of hackney carriage and private hire policy was undertaken in 2001, and it is suggested that it would be appropriate for a further full review to be carried out.

In conjunction with the review, the Committee will also be informed of the current best practice guidance for taxi and private hire licensing issued by the Department for Transport and also the key proposals contained within the Law Commission's recommendations for legal reform of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regimes.

6. Proposed timescales

It is suggested that any proposed changes to the policy guidelines to be put before the Licensing Committee for consideration by no later than 1 April 2015.

This timescale will be subject to consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire trade, public, other relevant bodies and partner agencies.

7. Legal implications

The legal implications are embodied within this report.

THE COMMITTEE IS REQUESTED TO DETERMINE THE MATTER

Licensing Manager
For Head of Health, Safety and Licensing