

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Consultation on Gravesham’s Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Earlier this year the Council published a revised [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021-26](#).

At that time, we undertook to carry out a further, interim review in relation to the vehicle emission (primarily in relation to electric vehicles) and vehicle inspection provisions as soon as practicable.

We are now writing to invite your comments on further proposed variations to the Policy which are summarised below and can also be viewed on the [consultation pages](#) of the council's website.

Vehicle Emissions/Electric Vehicle Proposals:

It is proposed that:

- a. From 1 April 2025, all vehicle licence applications for newly licenced vehicles (i.e. all applications other than those to ‘renew’ an existing vehicle licence for the same vehicle by the same holder) must be for vehicles that are powered wholly by electricity.
- b. From 1 April 2030, all vehicle licence applications must be for vehicles that are powered wholly by electricity.

Why?

The council made a commitment to take action to prepare for the borough to become carbon neutral by 2030 following its declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019 and must put steps in place now in order to support this.

It is considered that the proposals strike the best available balance between supporting the councils’ commitment and providing licence holders with a suitable lead-in period.

Vehicle Inspection Proposals:

It is proposed that:

- c. All additional MOT tests currently required by the council beyond those required by Road Traffic legislation (i.e. when vehicles are 1, 1 ½, 2 and 2 ½ years old, and then at the 6 month point between each annual MOT test) will be replaced with a ‘Safety and Standards Inspection’, to be carried out by appropriately qualified technicians at the council’s vehicle workshop located at the Brookvale Depot, or such other place as the council may reasonably require.
- d. All routine vehicle licensing inspections (e.g. the application inspections ordinarily carried out as part of new applications and annual renewal applications thereafter) carried out by Licensing Officers, will instead be carried out by technicians at the council’s vehicle workshop located at the Brookvale Depot.

Why?

When we previously consulted on proposals to introduce an additional vehicle inspection in order to better ensure that high vehicle standards are maintained, representatives of the local taxi and private hire trade were sympathetic to the aims but voiced concerns about the cost implications of introducing an additional inspection.

Swapping the additional MOT tests for a safety and standards inspection will ensure that key checks currently carried out as part of MOT tests can continue to take place to maintain the same level of road safety and environmental standards, but also enable the council to carry out additional compliance checks that would not be included as part of a standard MOT test (e.g. those contained within its policies), and adapt these when required, without vehicle proprietors incurring the additional costs associated with the introduction of an additional inspection.

How to Have Your Say:

Anyone wishing to comment can do so by emailing licensing@gravesham.gov.uk before midnight on **20th February 2022**. Any comments relating to specific aspects of the policy should include reference to the associated section and page number.

All responses received before the consultation closes will be taken into consideration for inclusion in the report that will be presented to the council's Operational Services Cabinet Committee for post-consultation scrutiny before being put before the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services for approval on behalf of the Cabinet.