

Taxi Policy Consultation Survey Results

Number of Responses: 29

Responses received from the following:

Please note that on some occasions there are more than one category that the response has come under.

Licensed Driver Only with TDC:	1
Licensed Driver and Vehicle Holder with TDC:	26
Licensed Driver, Vehicle and Operator Holder with TDC:	0
Currently going through process of becoming a driver:	0
Stakeholders (Organisations)	0
General Public:	2

Which area of Tendring do you live in?

Clacton	14	Kirby / Frinton / Walton / Thorpe	5
Jaywick	2	Manningtree	1
Holland / Great Holland	1	Point Clear / St Osyth	3
Harwich	1	Outside Tendring area	2

Do you agree the policy is easy to read?

	Total
Agree	12
Disagree	6
Neither	11

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below

Should be summarised for easy comprehension.

Whilst I agree that the policy is easy to read others will find it difficult. This will result in a very low response rate.

The policy document is fine. By its very nature it is a dry document. It has a contents table, the document is laid out in a logical way, which makes it easy to navigate.

The only amendment I would suggest is to have a separate section at the start of the draft document, listing the proposed changes, with a note to say where these changes can be found in the document (Page number. etc.).

As a Taxi Driver who is aware of the current policy my focus is on the proposed changes.

There is far too much for people to read.

It is not difficult but it's repetitive.

Too much jargon

Do you agree the policy is clearly laid out?

	Total
Agree	12
Disagree	6
Neither	11

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below.

None

Do you agree that the policy is easy to understand?

	Total
Agree	13
Disagree	6
Neither	10

If not how could we make it easier to understand

State clearly any changes ie vehicles, plates, colour of vehicles the council proposes to change in the draft.

Put it in layman's terms.

The Equalities Act 2010 places an obligation on the Council called the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty means we should try to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and support inclusive arrangements.

Is there anything you believe the Council should do to meet the needs of the diverse community the Council serves and who make use of Taxis and Private Hire Services? This would also cover barriers to using those services (or using them more extensively).

I believe the council are serving people well.

Direct communication with companies/operators together with any associations within the licensing area

Subject to mandatory requirements the council should remove as many barriers to licensing as it can and enable operators to charge rates according to demand. There are too few especially in rural areas which results in elderly and disabled being isolated.

Not experienced any problems.

Please feedback on any part of the policy

Appendix B. Dual Licence.

The wording regarding carrying children under 3 years old is unclear. The wording suggest that a child can be carried on a parents lap in addition to 4 passengers in a vehicle licenced for only 4 passengers. This would then make your insurance null and void. Therefore leaving you open to prosecution.

Agree with everything in the new policy.

Vehicle Licensing – Identity and Signage

Hackney Carriages (Taxis) can be flagged in the street and stop on Taxi ranks. The Council licences these and they are different from Private Hire Vehicles which must be pre-booked through a licensed Operator. Private Hire Vehicles and Operators are also licensed by the Council.

The intention of licensing is to ensure that taxis and private hire vehicles look different from the other.

The current ways the Council tries to differentiate Taxis from Private Hire Vehicles are:

Hackney Carriage (Taxis) – Top light with the word 'Taxi' (no minimum size), a meter inside the vehicle, green Council licence plate on rear exterior

Private Hire Vehicle (Pre-Booked) – No top light, yellow Council licence plate on rear exterior

The Council invites your views on whether replacement/newly licensed vehicles should be a single colour (and new/replacement Private Hire Vehicles would not be that colour). Over time this would develop into a single colour Taxi fleet with Private Hire Vehicles being any other colour of vehicle. The single colour for Taxis could be a dark green or another colour. Vehicles to be licensed as a Taxi that were not of that single colour could have a full body film wrap applied as long they fully maintained that film wrap while licensed. The policy would not apply to existing licensed Taxi vehicles while the vehicle continuously is licensed by the Council.

	Total
Agree	1
Disagree	25
Neither	3

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below.

This has been tried before a few years back. I hopefully still have the paper work from then It was agreed to be dropped as it is very restrictive to buy a car of a certain colour certain age certain size. And at present with prices of second hand and new vehicles and waiting time on them, I do not think it would be fair. The body wrap is a good idea but very expensive and hard to

maintain with the constant use of vehicle it being cleaned a lot more and the scuffs the car incurs on a daily basis from trolleys wheel chairs pushchairs mobility aids etc , I believe would end up making the car look very scruffy as the old colour will start showing through any scuffs and scratches. As an owner driver my car is for both work and private use.

I bought an electric vehicle 3 years ago to reduce the amount of damage my car was doing to the planet, I would be further restricted in buy an electric car of a certain colour in the price range I could afford. I do agree it would be helpful to distinguish private hire from hackney, maybe a magnetic sign for the bonnet?

I also feel this could stop some drivers being owner drivers and push them across to Uber, which I believe would be awful for Clacton with so many elderly and vulnerable people, as I don't think they need to be checked as much as Hackney , I may be wrong as I don't know much info on Uber I have a lot more views on this subject But I hope you will take these ones into consideration

I believe that taxis as they are with different colours is good enough, if the system isn't broke, then don't change it for change sake. I can't remember when I saw a licenced PH in tendring! 11 yrs ago the council wanted to change taxis to Green & White! Association members complained, & it went to court, the court agreed in our favour, therefore a prescedent was made.

Times are hard enough without having to pay to get taxis wrapped . And private hire can be any colour how could that be fair .

Colour scheme a terrible idea. Most local taxis are used for private purposes. Hundreds have been broken into over the years when parked overnight. Mine has been broken into twice at Clacton Golf Club car alone, plus other places. They break the driver's door window looking for money. The rain soaks the seat and it takes two days to get a replacement window, and it can't easily be driven home. When we park at an airport or seaport we take the top light off and park so the plate can not be seen. Police never attend without a line of enquiry. Why make us an easy target?

I/We consider the current vehicle licencing - identity and signage to be adequate. At the last survey the Tendring District Taxi Association carried out indicated that all operators carrying out public and private hire.

Recent communication with operators and drivers has indicated that improvements can be made to additionally identify licenced vehicles and drivers particularly to safeguard the public. A very high percentage of TDC drivers are owner drivers who use their cars privately and to pay their trade. It is generally considered far too expensive for them to enter the trade or extend their service to include the current proposal. The proposal is particularly restrictive in the current financial climate which operators and Independent drivers certainly object to. It is also felt that certain proposal changes will hinder their own private use together with not accommodating specific private work, wedding, funeral etc.

I have been working as a Taxi driver in Tendring for just over ten years now and I've never come across a problem with differentiating between Hackney Carriage and Private Hire. Believe me, customers are more likely to get in the wrong vehicle because they cannot remember or do not know who they have booked with.

But if you do want to go down the single colour for Hackney Carriage Taxis (Colchester has Black for example) my recommendation is SILVER.

1) Silver is a common colour, vehicles can be sourced easily, no need for expensive wrapping unless Tendring District Council wants to pay for this, because Taxi Drivers or prospective Taxi Drivers have enough to pay out for. We are self employed and at the moment it will not take a lot for us to walk away and get a job in Sainsbury's.

2) We work in a rural area, it would be great to clean the car after every customer but unfortunately that is not viable. Based on experience white gets dirty quickly where as silver, not so much.

3) As we already know black is used by Colchester so that would cause confusion plus my childhood days were spent being driven around in a black car, they get very hot and uncomfortable in the summer!!

Although the one colour scheme is a good idea.

Due to how many Hackney drivers using their vehicles as both taxis and private cars (myself included) then it renders the car a one use vehicle. eg: when attending a family function. Not very nice turning up in a car covered in taxi livery. Or taking your vehicle on holiday. You want to be inconspicuous. And thirdly, not everyone can afford to run a 2nd vehicle.

Your policy would make it too expensive for the average owner driver to replace and keep the taxi up to date.

Single colour of choice especially so regular passengers can differentiate between the drivers allowing them to easily spot their own particular driver. Also to have a body film wrap would be very expensive and not easily affordable in these times.

I can't really see why it needs to be changed from what's already in place with the limited amount of private hire plates that must have been issued. This would be another added cost for Taxi plated drivers I think another plate for the front of the vehicle should be displayed like taxis in Colchester

The cost of purchasing a car suitable for a taxi (vehicle under 5yrs old) is already a large purchase, I believe that a crest on the front or possibly a sign in the windscreen is a suitable option. The cost of wrapping a car is up to £4k which is just yet another expense to put onto owner/drivers!!! Please please consider the drivers who are trying to make a living as we feel we are being pushed into giving up altogether 😞

I feel this would limit the availability of choice when purchasing a replacement car for many drivers and operators.

Unnecessary barrier

Cost to the driver would put even more pressure on a already tough time

Too hard to find one of certain colour size age etc

Would take too long to achieve.

add financial pressure to drivers and families, no quote has been obtained by the council, also cars could be subject to vandalism with the new wraps

Economic

Cars have double in the used market and a full body wrap is around £3000 making a 3 year old car in the region of £20,000. Remember we are only taxi drivers.

I do not want the colour of my taxi car changed in any way. If you are going forward with this please let me know straight away so that I can contribute with all the other independent taxi drivers to get a solicitor. Because we are all against this change in colour and or wrapping of our

vehicles and do not agree to it.

Is there anything else the Council should consider to increase the distinction between Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles?

Magnetic signs - Easily removable.

No, a taxi is more than recognizable as it is, with a large white & yellow top light, no member of the GP had ever complained to my knowledge in (40) yrs about taxis not being recognisable.

Removable magnetic door signs maybe.

The use of front of vehicle/licence plate, alternative colour identification. Vehicle window QR code/alternative code licence identification. The recording of registered company operator vehicle signage.

I must admit, I do like the idea of a common magnet that could be used by all Tendring Hackney Carriage Taxis. White background with Border, Logo and writing in Tendring Green. Maybe include the tariff chart like you see on a New York Taxi.

Get rid of any additional advertising except one other magnet that has the company name of who the driver is driving for.

Private Hire could display pre-booked only livery even if only a door or window sticker.

No it is working perfectly the way it is now.

Private hire door signs to be larger

I think another plate for the front of Taxis should be displayed and a green top light with private hire for the private hire vehicles

I don't think there is a need. The general public would know who they have rang and booked.

There's probably a law preventing it but let both types do the same work. Choosing one or the other is a barrier in rural areas

Clearer signage for private hire.

happy with how it is currently run, as there is no top light and there is a yellow plate therefore it is easy to identify between the 2 - no change required

Small taxi plates for the front of taxis like Colchester.

Vehicle Licensing – Type of Vehicle and Age

The Council currently has policies about the maximum age vehicles can be licensed as a

Taxi/Private Hire Vehicle. This has tended to be for safety reasons.

The current requirements include:

A maximum upper age limit is currently in place as follow:

12 years for saloon, estate and MPV (people carrier) type vehicles;

13 years for Electric Vehicles and any vehicle with a CO2 emission reading of not greater than 110;

15 years for purpose built London style Taxi and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.

All vehicles are subject to two mechanical test inspections per year.

All vehicles are subject to a yearly inspection by Licensing Officers once the vehicle is 10 years old.

Should the maximum ages of vehicle be extended by a further two years going forward?

	Total
Yes	21
No	6
Neither	2

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below.

Having a body work and interior check at the mechanical test would be good.

I think the age requirement is good enough at present, but to buy a car for our trade could be increased to (6) yrs from the current (5) yrs.

As long as taxi is nice and clean looking and inside nice and cleaning looking .

Changing vehicle is now more expensive than ever. Better to allow a replacement vehicle of upto 6 years old (instead of the current 5 years) with a mileage limit of 50,000 as shown on the MoT certificate.

It really depends on the state of the car not its age.

You could buy a car that is ten years old but hardly driven and has another ten years of life or a car could be two years old and is in a condition that would barely scrape through a mechanical test.

To be honest, other than going by the vehicles age or mileage I cannot think of another way of setting this policy without it becoming subjective. What I mean by this is that a car is purchased by a driver thinking it is at a good standard but then the council believe it isn't, this causes bad feeling between the driver and the council and the driver will probably lose money on the car.

The answer would be that if the car is over five years old the council look at the car before it is purchased. Is that viable?

I think 14 years for the upper age limit is enough.

I think what should be extended is the year you can license a new taxi from the current age of 5 years or newer to 6 years or newer

I feel 12 years is acceptable, however, there are vehicles on the circuit that are looking very tired due to heavy wear and tear. These vehicles are no where near the existing 12 year limit.

Don't extend the age of the taxi by two years as this will result in Tendring having an older fleet of taxis which is pointless. You should extend the current new taxi registration age from 5 years to seven years as this represents a real life savings on the price of a new taxi and keeps the Tendring fleet newer and up to date!

Please consider the fact that electric vehicles will eventually be incorporated and considering the climate and cost of new vehicles - existing drivers should be allowed maybe 7 years when changing vehicles (if looked after and safe) as well.

All taxis would be better at 15 years. The 5yr limit to be moved to 6yrs. This would help with cost of purchase.

Yes I have suggested this before these vehicles are very well maintained this would not only be seen as the council giving something back to the drivers but would help in a big financial way as well as building a good relationship going forward in these challenging times.

If the car remains in an acceptable condition I cannot see why it cannot be licensed until 14 years old. The cost of replacing a suitable car is £16k plus, the servicing and maintenance costs are rising all the time.

If a vehicle is meeting the requirements needed by the council age should not be used against them.

Only for vehicles that would comply with ULEZ exemptions on environmental grounds

Would end up with load of old bangers with high mileage.

the modern cars of today are far more presentable and reliable than they were years ago

Also, existing plate holders to have a 7 year old start point instead off 5. To help off set the 60 percent extra cost of replacement cab, because of rising car prices.. milage entry point capped to sub 30000 miles?

Driver Licensing – Disclosure Barring Services (DBS)

At current DBS certificates are looked at every 3 years upon renewal. As part of moving forward, it is proposed that drivers sign up the DBS update service. This subscription service allows applicants to keep their DBS certificates up to date rather than having to make applications more frequently. This will enable drivers to continue without being suspended having to wait for a new DBS certificate upon request by the Licensing Authority.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that licence holders should be required to sign up to the DBS update service and have a live DBS certificate at all times?

	Total
Agree	21

Disagree	2
Neither	6

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below.

It depends how much it costs.

I think it is a positive move saving drivers from being suspended. If a driver has some health or private issues that mean they may take their eye off the ball so to speak.
It would also help licensing if they have to do a check on any individual should the council receive information of possible wrong doing that has not been by the licence holder.

At what cost subscription service and what would it entail for it to be continuous?

All drivers to be given benefit of doubt whilst waiting for DBS to come back and not suspended.

Surely this will make it easier for both parties.

Increased safety for vulnerable.

Only used when renewing licence.

As long as drivers who do not have access to broadband or emails can find this service also.

Points Based Enforcement System

The current warning protocol for Hackney Carriage Drivers/Vehicles Owners and Operators. If drivers, operators or vehicle owners receive three written warnings for breaches of conditions and/or traffic offence within a rolling 12 month period they are to be brought before the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub Committee for Councillors to determine whether they should continue to be licensed.

Your views are invited by the Council on moving from the three warnings in 12 months to a points based system, which will allow minor breaches of the rules to be recorded and considered in context, while referring those with persistent or serious breaches to the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub Committee for Councillors to determine whether they should continue to be licensed.

The aim would be to ensure that minor misdemeanours are allocated low numbers of points and acts/omissions which have a clear safety concern are allocated a higher number of points. A driver who breach a points total to have the Licence reviewed.

Do you agree with the principle of changing to a points based enforcement system?

	Total
Agree	22
Disagree	3
Neither	4

If you want to expand on this answer please use the box below.

I think this is fair.

I personally in 24 years haven't had any breaches of my licence however I think a point system seems fair

As a former founder & Chairperson of the (TDTA) I have been to several court proceedings regarding minor violations and had success in limiting the punishment handed out by (TDC) (ie) swearing/ parking.

Re Wensbury the punishment handed out in those cases were disproportionate to the offence. (ie) 2/ 3 MTH suspension's which could ruin a taxi drivers income + cause serious work related problems, not to mention health, stress, anxiety & possible marriage concerns.

In those cases I would impose a fine structure say £200 that way a driver could still work& earn a income.+ The (TDC could put that fine money into their treasury, rather than technically lose the case & pay the court a fine, which has happened in the past.

Unenforceable fairly.