

## Consultation Form

The policy proposes to update Ashford Borough Council's Taxi Licensing Policy.

The draft policy revises various taxi related issues in light of the revised Best Practice Guidance produced by the Department for Transport. The revision builds on the existing Taxi Policy and suggests changes based on the experienced of the last three years, feedback from taxi trade members and to reflect the principles of the Best Services Resources Allow as part of the Five Year Business Plan. The draft policy is available at [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk), at the Gateway Plus in Ashford and the Gateway in Tenterden.

You may make your submission by email or by post to:

Licensing Section  
Ashford Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Tannery Lane  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN23 1PL

Email: [licensing@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@ashford.gov.uk)

The closing date for submission is **1<sup>st</sup> March 2012**.

The council will take account of all views expressed during this consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be published on the Council's website.

### Contact Details

Name:	
Company/ Representative Group/ Relevant Enforcement Agency (if relevant)	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	
Date:	
Signature	

## Section 1 – Driver’s Licences

It is proposed that drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles will be granted licences for a maximum of 3 years, rather than the current maximum of one year. Annual checks of driver’s DVLA licences will be carried out to ensure that drivers are still entitled to drive and have not amassed excessive points on their licences. This will reduce the administration for the drivers and for the licensing authority.

<b>Q1 Do you think this is a suitable to issue driver’s licences for a maximum of three years?</b>	
<b>Q2 Are there any circumstances when you would consider this would not be suitable?</b>	
<b>Q3 Do you have any other comments to make on the granting of drivers licences?</b>	

## Section 2 – Medicals

Drivers are required to complete a medical to ensure they reach a required medical standard to drive. Currently drivers have to complete a medical on the first application. When they become 45, they are required to have a medical every five years and at 65, every year. It is proposed to link the requirement to have a medical into the renewal process to provide an efficient service.

<b>Q4 Do you agree with this approach?</b>	
Agree or Disagree	If you disagree with this approach please explain why
<b>Q5 Do you think medicals should be required every 3, 6 years or at another interval and how is this decision supported?</b>	

### Section 3 – Criminal Record Checks

It is the Council's view, supported by the taxi trade, that the public expects all reasonable precautions to be taken when determining whether to grant a licence to drive a hackney carriage or private hire and, as drivers are may work with children and vulnerable adults; an Enhanced Disclosure should continue to be the requirement for new drivers and for those renewing their licences.

<b>Q6 Do you agree with this approach?</b>	
Agree or Disagree	If you disagree with this approach please explain why

### Section 4 - Limitations on the number of hackney carriage vehicles

The Council does not impose quantity restrictions on hackney vehicles and the Department for Transport regards this as best practice, as it is suggested that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of those who use the services of such vehicles. Currently all additional vehicles must be wheelchair accessible and since the introduction of granting hackney carriage vehicle licences to wheelchair accessible vehicles, the proportion of such vehicles has increased to 20%.

<b>Q7 Do you agree with this approach?</b>	
Agree or Disagree	If you disagree with this approach please explain why

### Section 5 – Driver Standard Agency Tests

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) provides a driving assessment specifically designed for hackney carriage and private hire drivers. It is proposed that all new drivers will be required to pass the test before a driver's licence will be granted.

<b>Q8 Do you agree with this approach?</b>	
Agree or Disagree	Please explain why

## Section 6 – Dress Code & Code of Conduct

The Council believed that steps that serve to enhance the professional image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, and promotes the concept that drivers of licensed vehicles as vocational drivers are to be welcomed. A Code of Conduct has been in place since 2008 and it is proposed that the revised Code and the new Dress Code should be enforceable.

Q9 Do you agree with this approach?	
Agree or Disagree	Please explain why

## Section 7 – Vehicle Age Policy

The Council has an age restriction on licensed vehicles, (7 years for most vehicles and 10 years for purpose built taxis), but all applications for the licensing of vehicles are treated on their individual merit

Q10 Do you agree with this approach?	
Agree or Disagree	Please explain why

## Section 8 – Any other comments

Q9 Do you consider that the proposals will have an impact on equality issues? If so, please explain.

Q10 Do you have any further comments in relation to the policy?

**Please continue your comments on additional pages if required.**