

**Comments from the Licensing Committee
at its meeting on Monday 3 June 2015
LDS/106**



Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy

1. Supported the revision of Paragraph 23 of Appendix A to the report to read as follows:

“The Council is fully committed to meeting the needs of the travelling public in Crawley including those who have a disability of any nature. In addition to the disability awareness training drivers shall be required to undertake, the number of hackney carriages licensed by the authority will contain a sufficient number of vehicles which are capable of carrying a wheel chair as determined by an unmet demand survey which shall include a section on this matter. The Council therefore reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of wheel chair assessable vehicles based on local need. The decision as to whether any vehicle that is submitted to the Council for the purposes of being licenced as a hackney carriage, shall be capable of carrying a wheel chair will be at the discretion of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Licensing functions and be made with a reference to the local need at the time of the application”.

2. Several members of the Committee were of the opinion that the proposed vehicle age restriction was too low as modern cars had a longer life span and hackney carriages were usually maintained to a higher standard than private cars. However, other Committee members were of the view that the number of miles driven in a hackney carriage could not be compared with that of a privately owned car, and an 11 year old hackney carriage vehicle was significantly older in real terms.
3. The Committee was concerned that the Policy required all wheel chair accessible hackney carriages to load the chair from the side rather than the rear of the vehicle as hackney carriage drivers had suggested that power assisted wheel chairs could not be accommodated by a side loading vehicle. It was proposed that a suitable alternative for electric wheel chairs should be researched before that element of the Policy was introduced. It was agreed that the Environmental Health Manager would research the issue further before the July Cabinet meeting, so that Cabinet could consider the full facts, and make any necessary amendments to the Policy before it was recommended to Full Council.