



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019 – 2024

Summary Document

Introduction to this Summary

This Summary Document lists the main points from sections 1 – 9 of the Vehicle Licensing Policy.

Section 1 – 9 give the background for how and why the vehicle licensing policy has been written. These sections also include the law and some parts of the policy that are linked to other council procedures.

This summary is not the whole vehicle licensing policy.

Once you have read this summary (or the vehicle licensing policy) you can use the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/vehicle-licence-survey-2019> to give your feedback.

The online survey lists all the key conditions from the vehicle licensing policy.

Policy Introduction

The Vehicle Licensing Policy lists the rules and regulations covering the licensing of taxis (also called hackney carriages) and minicabs (also called private hire vehicles).

Watford Borough Council have written this policy to make sure decisions the council takes on which vehicles can be licensed are fair.

This policy will help to decide which conditions should be added to taxi or minicab vehicle licences.

The policy will help people to understand how safe taxis and minicabs are and also how easy they should be for everyone to access.

The policy will help businesses by listing everything that they need to know in one place.

To make the policy the council has listened to what the government says, what local businesses say, and to what people who use the taxis and minicab services have told us.

The policy should help to improve safety and make all services easier to access. The policy should help to reduce pollution and make the air cleaner.

The policy will begin on 22 October 2019 and will last until 2024. Some changes may be made in between these dates if there are changes to the law.

If there are any big changes, the council will ask people to give their opinions again.

The council will always listen to any person if they want to licence a vehicle. If the person can give good reasons why they should not follow some of this policy, then the council will decide if this should be allowed.

Specifications and Conditions for Vehicles

The Vehicle Licensing Policy lists what the Council thinks are the minimum standards that a taxi or minicab should reach for a licence to be granted.

Most of the standards apply equally to taxis and minicabs. If the standards are different for different types of licence the policy says this.

Accessibility

Watford Borough Council have an Accessible Transport Project. This project is ongoing and is always trying to find better ways to make transport accessible for everyone.

The new Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019 - 2024 is one way of supporting the project.

We have listened to reports from the House of Lords, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Department for Transport.

We will carry on listening to all views to make sure this policy helps everyone to travel as easily as possible.

Environmental Considerations

Watford Borough Council have declared a climate emergency. The Council has said they will do all they can to make Watford carbon neutral by 2030.

The UK government has passed law committing to a 'net-zero' carbon output by 2050.

The Council have also listened to government recommendation that say tough emissions standards should be introduced for all licensed vehicles.

Limitation of Numbers

Taxi Licences Only

On 19 March 2012 the Council set a maximum limit of 304 taxi vehicle licences.

The council can only limit the number of taxi licences if they can show there is no need for new licences.

The council will consider applications for a new licence if the person applying can show a good reason why the licence should be granted.

To help support the change to vehicles which do not cause as much pollution and to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the council will consider applications for new taxi licences where the vehicle is:

- A wheelchair accessible vehicle, and;
- Zero emission capable, and;
- Displays the approved Watford Borough Council livery

General duties of Proprietors (vehicle owners)

All applications must be made in the same way using the council's online booking system.

People applying for a licence must be at least 18 years old.

All vehicle licences last for a maximum of 1 year.

When the licence is close to running out, a new application must be made.

Late applications may be accepted but only in very limited circumstances where a good reason is given.

There is a fee for the licence which is set by the council.

If a person owns a vehicle with a licence and they rent the vehicle to someone else, they must keep all the details of the person renting from them.

Any person who has a taxi or minicab must tell the council if they move house. This must be done within 28 days of the move.

Maintenance of Standards

Vehicle licence conditions are in place to make sure vehicles reach a minimum safe standard.

Once a licence has been granted the owner must make sure the vehicle is kept in a mechanically safe and roadworthy condition at all times.

If the standard is not maintained the licence may be suspended or revoked (taken away).

A new licence may be refused (not given) if a person has not kept their vehicle in good condition.

Inspections and Enforcement

If a licence condition is breached (not followed) this will mean the council will take action to make sure the vehicle is safe before it is used again.

If this happens on more than one occasion, the council may decide to prosecute the vehicle owner or the council may revoke the licence.

Appeals

If a licence is revoked or suspended or refused, the person applying for a licence, or holding the licence, has the right to appeal to the court.

Details of how to appeal are sent to licence holders if they need them.