

RESPONSES FROM HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS' WORKSHOPS

Item of concern	Number of 'votes' NB: Drivers had to vote for their top 5 issues	Proposed solutions
<p><b>Penalty Points</b></p>	<p><b>44</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider if they're justified.</li> <li>• Minor and major offences: define and separate them.</li> <li>• Abolish penalty points altogether until there is sufficient rank space.</li> <li>• Drop points for some categories of offence.</li> <li>• Scrap points for parking related offences but keep the others.</li> <li>• Replace points with financial penalties for certain offences.</li> <li>• Suspension instead of points?: 2 days to a week?</li> <li>• Replace points with a 'three strikes' system.</li> <li>• Warnings before points?</li> <li>• Strong warnings, then revocation?</li> <li>• Increase severity of points before suspension</li> <li>• Points only for serious and proven offences?</li> <li>• Star system for good drivers.</li> <li>• Watch repeat offenders closely and revoke dual licence if they reoffend.</li> <li>• No letters or points but call in offenders for a stern face-to-face warning.</li> <li>• Refusals: Introduce a fixed £5 fare for short journeys to discourage this.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officer's response:</i> The Licensing Committee is being asked to review the existing enforcement regime.</p>		

Ranks - space and location

37

- Only one town centre rank required but sufficient to be within reach of whole town centre.
- One Bell: swap rank and disabled parking spaces for greater visibility.
- Suggested locations for new ranks: Vicarage Road, Station Road, Ascot Road; St Albans Road (near shops and Wishing Well pub, 24 hour rank both sides of the road); Dome (near Pizza Hut); Tesco Express loading bay; Café Nero; Palace Theatre; Roosters Chicken; BHS; all supermarkets; at the new town centre market; Halifax (replace the bus stop?); all stations (including new Met line stations); hospital; Harry Potter studios; The Horns Pub (a 24 hour rank for 6 cars?)
- **Barclays rank:** re-examine when loading takes place and expand period when rank is available to drivers.
- **Shady Lane:** extend rank and move Pay & Display to Westland Road.
- **Harlequin centre rank:** possible to extend it?
- **Outside Revolution:** space for 4 vehicles.
- **Rickmansworth Road:** offer 24 hour rank by extending layby around bus stop.
- Watford Junction – road ownership – only leased to London Midland? Is the permit fee valid?
- Enforcement officer to be 'on call' to deal with public parked on Waterstones rank.
- Talk to the big supermarkets and encourage them to use WBC drivers instead of 3R.
- Need to make the current trial at the Junction effective: drivers to collaborate to ensure it works.
- Improve visibility at junction – eg. At Zebra crossing.
- Planning permission for new developments: new taxi rank space to be pertinent to applications
- There needs to be 24 hour rank space for approx 20% of the taxis (suggested by Westminster Council and Transport & General Workers' Union).
- Albert Road South: impose a night time traffic order to avoid illegal taxis plying for hire and anti-social behaviour in and around Sainsbury's car park.
- Put a cap on driver badges (the cap

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ranks – space and locations</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albert Road South: impose a night time traffic order to avoid illegal taxis plying for hire and anti-social behaviour in and around Sainsbury's car park.</li> <li>• Iceland rank is facing the wrong way and is on the wrong side of the road: not safe as customers have to walk in the road to reach the first car and drivers take jobs from the back of the queue - can it be reversed?</li> <li>• Put a cap on driver badges (the cap on vehicle licences is not effective because several drivers will share a car)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> A review has been conducted of town centre ranks and is due to be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Door Signs</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">34</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abolish door signs: vehicle already has a plate and roof sign – keep it simple.</li> <li>• Allow magnetic door signs; (50% of drivers in one workshop would be happy with magnetic signs instead of no signs).</li> <li>• Allow magnetic door signs <b>or</b> a front or back screen sticker: drivers to be given a choice between the two.</li> <li>• Can the council crest appear on the side of the roof sign instead? - on the opposite side from the disability logo.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> This is a procedural issue for officers to explore rather than requiring a policy decision. Officers discussing with Chair of Licensing a trial of 12 months with the option for magnetic signs. Drivers to be consulted.</p>		

<b>Vehicle Age limits</b>	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change lower limit to 6, 7 or 8 years old for all vehicles.</li> <li>• Bring down upper age limit in exchange for a more generous lower age limit.</li> <li>• Upper age limit to be scrapped altogether if the vehicle still passes its MoT.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> This is a policy decision for the Licensing Committee to consider. Officers recommending a maximum 7 year age limit for vehicles when first licensed.</p>		
<b>Repeat DSA assessment</b>	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep test for new drivers (generally agreed by all drivers).</li> <li>• DVLA resit to offer exemption from council request to resit.</li> <li>• Only resit if banned but not required by DVLA.</li> <li>• Revert request to resit from 6 to 9 points.</li> <li>• Abolish any requests to resit after 9 points when already previously taken at 9 points.</li> <li>• Mandatory DSA resit every 9 years/3 badge renewals: abolish it.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> This is a policy decision for the Licensing Committee to consider. The mandatory requirement to retake the test every 9 years has already been abolished. Officers recommending a different approach, either stop the requirement to resit, or replace with an alternative that is more educative in focus.</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Traffic Wardens: targeting licensed drivers unfairly/Town Centre pick-ups</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">17/13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange a meeting between parking shop and driver representatives.</li> <li>• CEOs to allow licensed drivers 2- 5 minutes' grace when picking up or dropping off passengers.</li> <li>• CEOs to move drivers on instead of reporting them.</li> <li>• Improve rank space: less need to park on double yellow lines.</li> <li>• Introduce designated drop-off / pick-up spots – not to be used as ranks!</li> <li>• Introduce a 'green card' / stars on the doors system: drivers with a good record to be exempt from points.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officer's response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers have had initial meeting with the Parking Service to develop better understanding of the pressures faced by CEOs and drivers.</li> <li>• A review of the ranks has been conducted and will be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development. Proposals include increased rank space and pick up drop off areas.</li> <li>• Officers are developing proposals for a licence-holder recognition scheme.</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vehicle Tests/MoT: Inconvenient and too strict</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a 'one stop shop test': Council to do actual MoT as well as licence plate inspection.</li> <li>• Allow a period of grace if a vehicle fails on a minor item – plate to be offered and driver to address the 'failed' item within a week.</li> <li>• Drop First Aid kit requirement as drivers rarely qualified to administer first aid</li> <li>• Drop requirement for 'first aid kit on board' sign as the kit is not for passenger use.</li> <li>• Re-examine vehicle regulations.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officer's response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers are reviewing and updating the vehicle licence conditions and test requirements and will bring further recommendations to the Licensing Committee as required.</li> <li>• A "grace period" of up to 10 working days (unless the licence expires beforehand) already exists</li> <li>• Council does not have appropriate facilities to offer MOT tests as well</li> <li>• When this was discussed at workshops the majority of drivers agreed the changes had been beneficial now that improvements had been made to</li> </ul>		

the current system and drivers were more familiar with it.		
<b>Tariff / Minimum fare</b>	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All drivers to have automatic meters (tariffs 3 and 4 open to abuse).</li> <li>Scrap tariffs 3 and 4 / simplify the tariff.</li> <li>Replace tariffs 3 and 4 with a surcharge.</li> <li>Tariffs to follow the PCO rate of increase.</li> <li>Increase tariff and decrease distance.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will review the current fare tariff with representatives from the trade commencing in April.</p>		
<b>Parking</b>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Fare refusals</b>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops other than in the context of enforcement policy (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Dual licence fees</b>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a hackney carriage only badge which is cheaper than a dual badge.</li> <li>Pay for badges by instalments (direct debit?).</li> <li>Reduce fees for drivers who 'renew with no changes' (less processing time).</li> <li>Introduce a 5 year badge.</li> <li>Good drivers to get a reduction in badge fee.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officer's response:</i> Officers are exploring options to pay by direct debit and instalments, although licences (badges) are currently granted for the legal maximum period of three years. Officers explained the process of granting a dual or sole licence is the same and therefore it would not impact on pricing.</p>		
<b>Other drivers working in Watford</b>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops other than in relation to enforcement approach and in relation to trying to restrict access to Albert Road South (see above)</li> </ul>

<b>Bus lanes (including poor signage)</b>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check traffic regulation order.</li> <li>• Try to obtain access to all lanes.</li> <li>• Woodmere Avenue: bus access through width restrictions.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers to explore this further with Hertfordshire County Council.		
<b>Width restrictions</b>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<b>Rank signage</b>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce bigger signs at ranks.</li> <li>• New signs for areas from where public likely to need a taxi.</li> <li>• Advertising: can the ranks be promoted on the screens in the Intu Watford shopping centre?</li> <li>• Need to advertise where ranks are and when they are open.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> A review of the ranks has been conducted and will be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development. This includes increased signage and information of location.		
<b>Driver Safety</b>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Private hire drivers plying for hire</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict access to Albert Road South to taxis only and Watford private hire vehicles only (10pm to 5am).</li> <li>• Request greater Police co-operation:</li> <li>• Police to question drivers and remove those plying for hire; also at supermarkets.</li> <li>• High visibility patrols.</li> <li>• Areas for consideration: Roslyn Road, Wilmington Close, Palace Theatre, Market Street, Barclays rank, Oceana layby and Horns layby.</li> <li>• Continue with prosecutions.</li> <li>• Drivers to accompany Licensing Enforcement Officer to gain an understanding of enforcement issues.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers will continue with their enforcement activities.</li> <li>• Officers to explore whether powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill can be used in relation to Albert Road South</li> <li>• Options for limiting access to Albert Road South at night are being explored with the Police.</li> </ul>		

<b>Christmas tree in St Mary's Square / Visibility of One Bell rank</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed other than consider location next year subsequent to any change in rank provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Zafiras licensed for only 4 passengers: complaints from public / same insurance costs</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revert to licensing for 6 passengers (it's a matter of comfort, not safety).</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officer will consider this issue in more detail and take any proposals to the Licensing Committee in June 2014.		
<b>Police - assistance with recovery of fares not paid</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed. Officers advised to continue to inform Police and Licensing; some recoveries now being made.</li> </ul>
<b>Taxi marshalls</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A difficult job and they need more training.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers are working with the marshalls to improve the service offered.		
<b>Members of the public parking on the ranks</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers advised CEOs able to enforce, will liaise with CEOs.		
<b>First Aid training for drivers</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<b>Poor communication between WBC and drivers (including no feedback)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange an annual meeting for all drivers.</li> <li>Send important updates by text message.</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will make proposals for better communication to the drivers for consideration.		
<b>Vehicle cleanliness (other drivers' cars)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will continue to make check inspections of cars on the ranks.		
<b>Lack of toilets / washing facilities for drivers at night</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could the council have an arrangement with a local hotel for drivers to use the toilet and to change their clothes if wet?</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will investigate options.		



<b>Different rates for private hire and hackney carriage</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<b>Overcharging</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops other than in the context of enforcement policy (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Appeals system</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops other than in the context of enforcement policy (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Accident damage policy</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<b>Other Watford drivers - poor standards - dress, attitude, road knowledge, etc etc</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions not discussed in detail at the workshops other than in the context of enforcement policy (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Zebra crossing (Junction) - poor visibility for drivers</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers advised Watford Junction review underway.		
<b>Rank space at new developments</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers advised Planning and Transportation Section made aware of need for consideration of rank space at development approval stage.		
<b>Hospital and supermarket driver contracts with other authorities</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers advised rank options are being explored on private land and officers will promote the use of Watford Companies where possible.		
<b>Buses to Harry Potter studios - reduces work</b>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific solutions proposed</li> </ul>

## PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER WORKSHOPS

Item of concern	Proposed solutions
<b>No drop off points near town centre (Marks &amp; Spencer) for elderly passengers.</b>	None detailed.
<b>No parking/pick up point at the Met quarter.</b>	None detailed.
<i>Officer's response:</i> A review of the ranks has been conducted and will be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development. This includes options for drop off and pick up.	
<b>Watford Junction: very poor traffic flow - takes 15 minutes to go around and back.</b>	None detailed.
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers advised Watford Junction review underway.	
<b>Hackney carriage drivers use the Horns lay-by as a taxi rank.</b>	Consider review of provision.
<i>Officer's response:</i> A review of the ranks has been conducted and will be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development. This includes options for drop off and pick up.	
<b>Lack of bus lay-bys leads to buses parking in the road.</b>	Arrange a meeting between town planners and road users?
<b>Traffic lights are "a punishment".</b>	Different timings possible for day and night – especially in Hagden Lane and Stratford Way?
<b>Road narrowing restrictions on Woodford Avenue.</b>	None suggested
<b>Rosslyn Road - dangerous for drivers.</b>	One way system needs enforcing to avoid accidents when drivers leave the car park.
<b>Top of Bushey Mill Lane - drivers get 'trapped' at junction.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow a right turn into Balmoral Road to relieve pressure on traffic headed for the Dome.</li> <li>• Can drivers assist by marking congestion spots on a map or compile a list for the council?</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will make Highways aware and consider a meeting between driver representatives and them .	
<b>DSA test resit now at 6 points - drivers are "punished twice".</b>	None detailed.
<i>Officer's response:</i> This is a policy decision for the Licensing Committee to consider. The mandatory requirement to retake the test every 9 years has already been abolished.	

<b>Private hire drivers from other authorities ranking in the town at weekend evenings.</b>	None suggested
<i>Officer's response:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers will continue with their enforcement activities.</li> <li>• Officers to explore whether powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill can be used in relation to Albert Road South</li> <li>• Options for limiting access to Albert Road South at night are being explored with the Police.</li> </ul>	
<b>Hackney drivers "stealing customers" when cars are mistaken by customers as pre-booked.</b>	None suggested
<b>Dropping the colour restrictions on hackney vehicles has lead to public confusion.</b>	Reinstate black and white livery for hackneys to avoid confusing the general public.
<i>Officers' response:</i>	
Officers will consult with hackney carriage licence-holders on possible solutions.	
<b>MoT bookings: drivers can't always get a booking for the following day if required.</b>	Have 'reserve' appointments for new cars and courtesy vehicles ('emergencies' only).
<i>Officers' response:</i>	
Appointments are generally available within a day or so apart from peak times. Officers reviewing bookings system for peak times to see if "reserve appointments" can be accommodated.	
<b>Poor communication between council and licensed drivers.</b>	None suggested
<i>Officer's response:</i>	
Officers will make proposals for better communication to the drivers for consideration.	

## PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS' WORKSHOP

<p><b>No designated drop-off/pick-up points in town.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce and advertise designated pick-up points at Barclays bank or Marks and Spencer.</li> <li>• Maybe Halifax could also be a night drop-off point?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> A review of the ranks has been conducted and will be considered by the Head of Regeneration and Development.</p>	
<p><b>Inadequate feedback on the Knowledge Test results: discouraging for new drivers.</b></p>	<p>Suggested an apprentice/probationary type scheme.</p>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> Officers are reviewing how the Knowledge Test procedure currently works and will explore if a provisional type licence is needed.</p>	
<p><b>There are not enough new private hire drivers - operators have to take on hackney drivers instead.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probationary driver scheme where new drivers serve an 'apprenticeship' with an operator and have a time limit by which they need to pass the knowledge test.</li> <li>• Apprenticeships would also help operators to decide which drivers they would like to keep.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> Officers are exploring this as above. Probationary licences may be complex and difficult to justify, particularly if licences are granted before a person has passed the Knowledge Test.</p>	
<p><b>Hackney carriage drivers pick and choose their jobs.</b></p>	<p>None suggested</p>
<p><b>Hackney carriage drivers also have a poor attitude towards private hire drivers - it undermines their skills.</b></p>	<p>None suggested</p>
<p><b>Tariff difference between hackney carriage drivers (who work for operators) and the operator's own private hire tariff causes problems for operators - leads to complaints from members of public who are unhappy and confused with the different types of fare.</b></p>	<p>None suggested</p>
<p><i>Officers' response:</i> Officers will review the current hackney carriage tariff with trade representatives although private hire operators are entitled to set their own tariffs.</p>	

<b>Penalty points system not fair or effective.</b>	Introduce a £20 fine for offences or a system of suspensions.
<i>Officer's response:</i> The Licensing Committee is being asked to review the existing enforcement regime.	
<b>Watford Junction: no obvious drop-off points.</b>	Can the lay-bys be made into designated drop-off points?
<i>Officers' response:</i> Officers are working with London Midland and others to re-examine Watford Junction.	
<b>Operator door stickers: Not popular with (1) private hire drivers and (2) operators who undertake a lot of VIP work. Also discourages new private hire drivers who would want to use their vehicle for private use without a plate and stickers.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give private hire drivers a choice of magnetic or permanent stickers</li> <li>• for executive (but not chauffeur) cars could the requirement for a plate be dropped if the sticker is retained?</li> <li>• Could a badge in front and rear windcreens could replace the sticker and/or plate?</li> </ul>
<i>Officers' response:</i> Officers are examining alternative options.	
<b>DSA resit</b>	Keep the DSA for new drivers only and extend validity to five years if they have already passed the test for another borough.
<i>Officers' response:</i> This is a policy decision for the Licensing Committee to consider.	
<b>MoT/plate inspection test: operators already ensure that their drivers' vehicles have the road fund licence and MOT. What can the council do to help them in return?</b>	None detailed.
<i>Officers' response:</i> Officers are examining how a licence-holder recognition scheme could be introduced	
<b>Communication between council and drivers could be better.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter could be emailed to operators (instead of posted as previously) who would print copies for their notice boards.</li> <li>• Could the council hold quarterly meetings for drivers?</li> </ul>
<i>Officer's response:</i> Officers will make proposals for better communication to the drivers for consideration.	