

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2021

REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the completion of the consultation process on a revised policy for Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Members will recall that the last full review of the Policy took place in 2018.
- 2.2 At the September Committee Members considered a report on the new statutory standards for the taxi and private hire vehicle sector across England and Wales. It was agreed that a further report would be submitted outlining the detail of the new guidelines and the changes needed to the Council's policy to comply with the new standards.
- 2.3 At November committee, a report was presented to Members which compared the current NSDC Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy with the DFT Statutory Guidance for Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

3.0 Statutory Guidance for Taxi & Private Hire Standards

- 3.1 The Department for Transport issued new Statutory Guidance on Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards focusing on the role of taxi licensing powers and enhanced regulation in protecting children and vulnerable adults. The guidance sets out core minimum standards that all licensing authorities are expected to meet in order to further safeguard vulnerable passengers, increase safety for the travelling public in general.
- 3.2 These standards are an important first step in reforming the way the taxi (HC) and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector is regulated and should ensure consistent standards between licensing authorities.

Para 1.3 of the Standards states:

There is consensus that common core minimum standards are required to regulate better the taxi and private hire vehicle sector, and the recommendations in this document are the result of detailed discussion with the trade, regulators and safety campaign groups. The Department therefore expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.

- 3.2 The current Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy was implemented on 1 April 2018 and continues to be effective in ensuring that those applicants and/or licence holders that do not take seriously the need to safeguard children and vulnerable persons or promote the need for public safety and public confidence in the trade are adequately dealt with.

3.3 Due to the work already undertaken both by Newark & Sherwood District Council and in conjunction with the other Nottinghamshire authorities in developing the current Policy, the additional requirements placed on the Council by the Statutory Standards can be very easily implemented, and these requirements/amendments are listed at **Appendix A**.

4.0 Consultation Details

4.1 A copy of the draft policy can be found at **Appendix B**, which highlights the changes to the policy in yellow.

4.2 A 4 week consultation began on 27 January 2021 to 24 February 2021 for the draft hackney carriage and private licence policy. Comments or representation on the draft policy were welcomed.

4.3 Copies of the draft policy have been circulated to a range of organisations and individuals. A list of the consultees are shown below:

- All licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers
- All licensed Private Hire Operators
- All licensed Private Ambulance Operators
- All licensed ambulance drivers
- Nottinghamshire local authorities
- Ollerton Disability Group
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Local Police Inspector
- NSDC Corporate Safeguarding Group
- Lincolnshire adjoining Local Authorities

All have been asked to comment.

4.4 Set out below are the comments received back in the response and the proposed course of action.

Consultee	Consultee Comment	Officer Response	Recommendation
Dianne Munford	Taxi drivers employed by local hackney carriage firms should all be registered with Newark & Sherwood District Council before they can operate within this area and have knowledge of the local area. Some working here are registered in Wolverhampton and do not know the local area. They should not be allowed to be hired in this area.	This is an issue that NSDC has faced since the deregulation of taxis in 2015.	That the Committee Chairman write to Grant Shapps, the Secretary of State for Transport regarding this matter.
Sean Stevens	As we have asked many times before I would like the Council to review the taxi age limit and change it from 8 years to 10 years to fall in line with other local councils. I currently do contract work for Nottinghamshire County Council and can use a vehicle up to 10 years old on their policy but cannot drive a taxi that is older than 8 years in Newark.		

	<p>I find this very frustrating because we are getting rid of perfectly good vehicles that we spend a lot of money on during their time as a taxi on the road.</p> <p>Modern cars last much longer than they did years ago and this 8 year rule is outdated and needs to be changed ASAP.</p> <p>Also the influx of out of town taxis also makes it very hard for us to compete with them over price plus they can drive older vehicles so therefore earn more money because they change the vehicles less often.</p> <p>Many Hackney taxis have gone over the past year during the pandemic and things have not been easy for us as our work has almost vanished.</p> <p>I strongly recommend that this is looked at to save the Hackney taxis in Newark.</p> <p>It forces us to buy newer vehicles with higher mileage so we can save money but this comes at a risk of high maintenance bills.</p> <p>I have current plans to go private hire in 2022 on a Grantham licence unless this rule is changed in Newark so I can continue my contract/airport & telephone work.</p>		
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5.0 **Proposals**

- 5.1 As Members will see from the above there are no comments that have been received that, in the opinion of Officers, would not require wholesale changes to the draft Policy.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the draft Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy and Guidance Document (**Appendix B**) be approved, subject to any changes that Members may wish to make.

6.0 **Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 The Policy has also been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and no significant issues arose as a result of this review.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS** that:

- (a) **Members consider the comments received from the consultation exercise on the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy and identify any subsequent changes arising from the comments; and**

(b) subject to any changes identified, the draft Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy And Guidance 2021 be adopted.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Nicola Kellas on Ext 5894

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