

Blaby District Council
Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Date of Meeting 1 November 2021
Title of Report **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy**
Report Author Environmental Services Manager

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report seeks to review, update, and amalgamate the Council's Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator Policies, and in doing so, implements recent government guidance of the "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards" issued by the Department for Transport.
- 1.2 A recent four week consultation with the trade and other interested parties has been undertaken, this report features responses from the consultation and considers further changes/amendments to the policy as a result.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be acknowledged.
- 2.2 For the Committee to review the consultation responses and consider any relevant/appropriate alterations.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Group Manager of Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, for making minor amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy prior to its presentation to Council.

3. Reason for Decision(s) Recommended

- 3.1 It is appropriate that members of the Licensing And Regulatory Committee review and provide comment on the Policy prior to its adoption by Council.
- 3.2 This is to ensure that any last minute amendments to the policy can be incorporated into the final policy to be submitted to Council in November 2021.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

Blaby District Council as the Licensing Authority are responsible for licensing more than 80 vehicles, which undertake a large number of local and national journeys. The Council licence approximately 69 individuals as

drivers who must be 'fit and proper' to hold a licence, as well as a number of private hire operators who are responsible for dispatching licenced drivers and vehicles.

Additionally, and for consideration, The Department for Transport (DfT) recently published the document "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards." These Standards set out a range of robust measures to protect private hire and hackney carriage passengers; namely vulnerable children and adults. The Standards were to be considered, and where appropriate, to be implemented by Local Authorities before the end of 2021.

As a result, an updated Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy including these Standards has been developed. It is attached to this report at Appendix A.

A summary of the amendments made to the current policy is attached to this report at Appendix B.

4.2 Relevant Consultations

The Council published a consultation on the Policy from the 6th September 2021 until the 4th October 2021. All Private Hire, and Hackney Carriage drivers were notified by text or email of the consultation. All Operators were also notified by text or email of the consultation and were telephoned directly over last few weeks of the consultation advising that the Policy was out for consultation.

A number of consultation responses were received. The majority of the responses were positive and supported all the changes. Additionally, some responses proposed additional items to consider, or made requests to include additional options.

Other responses informed of their concern that the vehicle age policy is changing, requesting that the Council reconsider any changes to the vehicle age policy because of the current financial difficulties faced within the trade following the Covid-19 pandemic. The responses indicated assistance from the Council is required to help with their financial recovery, rather than making changes to vehicle specifications which would cause further financial burden.

A summary of all responses is provided as Appendix C.

4.3 Proposal(s)

That the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be acknowledged and accepted by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and recommended for approval by Council, having considered the consultation responses.

4.4 Significant Issues

There are no significant issues, relating to Human Rights, Legal Implications, Human Resources, Equalities and Public Health Inequalities. There are issues regarding Climate Local, these are addressed Section 8.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

5.1 There are no opportunities for savings.

	Current year	2022/23
Revenue	Met within existing budgets	Met within proposed budgets
Capital	None	None

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Risk to Public using Private Hire and Hackney Carriages licensing by the Council.	Policy contains standards and provides a robust policy to regulate drivers, vehicle proprietors, and operators representing the Council.
Not implementing the DfT Standards before the end of 2021.	Policy drafted to comply with request from DfT to implement standards by end of 2021.

7. Other options considered

7.1 There are no other options available.

8. Other significant issues

8.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

8.2 The report identifies how the Licensing team are looking to develop a greener taxi fleet, primarily by reducing the maximum age of licensed vehicles, which as a result, will cause vehicles to have more efficient and less polluting engines. By September 2025, all licensed vehicles will have a Euro 6 type engine or newer. This will assist the Council as it looks to reduce its overall carbon footprint.

9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix A – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

9.2 Appendix B – Summary of Policy Changes

9.3 Appendix C – Consultation responses

10. Background paper(s)

Department for Transport's statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>

11. Report author's contact details

Anna Farish	Environmental Services Manager
Anna.farish@blaby.gov.uk	0116 272 7643