



North Devon Council

Report Date: 8th February 2022

Topic: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy- Vehicle Specification Policy Development

Report by: Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report seeks to consult members of Licensing and Community Safety Committee ('LCSC') on options for possible changes to the vehicle specification within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy, with a view to improving the environmental impact of the taxi trade in North Devon.

1.2. In common with a number of other South West Licensing Authorities, the Licensing Team at North Devon have recently given consideration to how the vehicle specifications within the policy could be amended to reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gases and air pollutants, with the aim of reducing the environmental impact of the taxi trade. Several possible options for policy amendment have been drafted, and the views of Members of the LCSC are invited prior to a request for a public consultation on any proposed changes are brought to a subsequent meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Licensing and Community Safety Committee:

2.2. Consider the options presented for the amendment of the vehicle standards found at **Appendix A**.

2.3. Indicate their preferred option, or direct Officers to make amendments to the proposed options, with a view to the amended options being brought back to a subsequent meeting as part of a request to go out to public consultation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To ensure the Council's policies are regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

3.2. To contribute to the Council's Corporate plan priority to "Cherish and protect our environment".

4. REPORT

4.1. North Devon Council (NDC) approved the policy and associated conditions of licence for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades in August 2016 and contained the following positive environmental requirements:

- *Vehicles must be less than 5 years old when presented for licensing. Vehicles older than this will be licensed only at the discretion of the Licensing Sub Committee.*
- *It is considered that efforts should be made, through the licensing policy, to improve, as far as possible, the efficiency of vehicles licensed in the district by, in particular, reducing the levels of CO2 emitted. Appendix A Paragraph 17.0 makes it clear that LPG conversions to vehicles are perfectly acceptable.*

4.2. Further to the Governments announcement at the end of 2020 regarding plans to end sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2030, it has become apparent that consideration should be given to amending the vehicle specification above to encourage the taxi trade towards low, ultra-low and zero emission vehicle alternatives. The phase-out of petrol and diesel cars will be in two stages, with sales of conventional cars with engines banned from 2030, and hybrid and plug-in hybrid models with significant zero-emission capability allowed until 2035.

4.3. In addition to the Government announcement, in September 2018, the Energy Savings Trust/ Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership published a Low Emission Taxi Guide which is attached at **Appendix B**, and contains an excellent summary of low carbon vehicle options and policy considerations which members are advised to review as background to this discussion.

4.4. The Low Emission Taxi Guide outlines a number of relevant regulatory/ policy measures that can be considered by Licensing Authorities:

- *Revise Conditions of Fitness: Revise conditions of fitness for newly licenced vehicles to state that they must meet LEV (low emission vehicle) standards as a minimum. More ambition could be encouraged through requiring 'best in class' CO2 emissions and Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV).*
- *Vehicle age limits for new vehicles: Revise the age limits for newly licenced vehicles- including the age at which vehicles can be first licenced (for example Euro 6 emission standard) and a total age limit. Consider higher age limits for ULEV.*

- *Vehicle age limits for existing vehicles: Place in a more ambitious age restriction on existing vehicles.*

4.5. A low emission vehicle is defined by the Guide as a vehicle that complied with either Euro 6 emission standard for diesel and LPG vehicles, or Euro Emission standard 4 for petrol vehicles.

4.6. A review of other Devon/ neighbouring Licensing Authorities policies on vehicle standards has also been undertaken for benchmarking purposes, and can be found attached at **Appendix C**.

4.7. Taking into account the policy measures suggested in the Low Emission Taxi Guide, and the benchmarking with other Licensing Authorities, two options for policy amendment have been developed and attached at **Appendix A**. In addition, the options include proposed provisions to incentivise the uptake of both wheelchair accessible vehicles and ULEV's. Both of these vehicle types commonly involve additional purchasing costs, and in the case of wheelchair accessible vehicles additional running costs (for example many WAVs are larger vehicles and as such have lower fuel economy than smaller vehicles). Increased provision of these vehicle types would be helpful in pursuing the Councils aims to "cherish and protect the environment" and also "accessibility to all members of the community".

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Any financial costs which are reduced or incurred through the consideration process of updating the Taxi policy will be taken into account when calculating fees for taxi related licences.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. An equalities impact assessment will be included with a subsequent report seeking permission to go out to public consultation on any proposed taxi and private hire policy changes.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. A full Environmental Assessment checklist will be produced with a subsequent report seeking permission to go out to public consultation on any proposed taxi and private hire policy changes. The whole thrust of this report, and any subsequent report, will be to create environmental benefits.



8. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

8.1. Article of Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph: 4b

8.2. Referred or delegated power?: Delegated

9. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

9.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: neutral

9.1.2. Improving customer focus: neutral, whilst some aspects of implementation of improved vehicle standards, could be cited by drivers to be an additional 'hindrance', the policy suggestions seek to promote public safety and the environment which is of customer and wider economic benefit.

9.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: neutral, whilst some aspects of implementation of improved vehicle standards, could be cited by drivers to be an additional 'hindrance', the policy suggestions seek to promote public safety and the environment which is of customer and wider economic benefit.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1. This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report):

- The Energy Savings Trust/ Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership Low Emission Taxi Guide;
- North Devon Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

12.1. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager.

27.01.22