



North Devon Council

Report Date: 5th December 2022

Topic: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Qualification Standards

Report by: Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek to adopt an amendment to North Devon Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (7 November 2022 version) (the 'policy') in respect of taxi and private hire driver qualification standards. A copy of the relevant paragraphs of the proposed amended policy are found at **Appendix A**.

2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1.1 It is RECOMMENDED that Strategy and Resources Committee:

2.1.2 Approve the recommendation of Licensing and Community Safety Committee made on the 11 October 2022, namely to 'retain the requirement for a vocationally recognised taxi qualification, but give an alternative training option of a new driver training course (either the vocationally recognised taxi qualification, or the New Taxi Driver Training Course). Again prior to obtaining a licence in the case of the new driver course'. As such it is suggested that Strategy and Resources Committee approve:

2.1.2.1 a revision of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy in line with **Appendix A**.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3.2 To react to concerns in respect of the length of time taken for prospective drivers to gain taxi and private hire driver's licences.

3.3 To ensure that the taxi and private hire driver licensing standards are proportionate and fit for purpose.

4 REPORT

- 4.1 During their meeting of the 11 October 2022, Licensing and Community discussed an email received from a Private Hire Operator which highlighted the lengthy period for new driver applicants to become licenced (the letter was also published in the September edition of [Private Hire and Taxi Monthly](#)).
- 4.2 Officers undertook a benchmarking exercise with other Devon and Somerset Authorities, and proposed a number of policy amendment options for the Committee to consider.
- 4.3 After a detailed discussion and debate in respect of five available options, Licensing and Community Safety Committee decided to recommend to Strategy and Resources the following change to the new driver application process:
- Applicants to have the option of attending a new licenced driver course OR the previous BTEC/ NVQ qualification;
- 4.4 The new licenced driver course is shorter format course than the BTEC/ NVQ but considered to still cover the most important information for a new licenced driver.
- 4.5 Officers are in contact with course providers and hope to be in a position to approve the first course shortly. Critically, the new licenced driver training courses are currently being run every month.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any financial costs which are reduced or incurred through the approval of a new policy will be taken into account when calculating fees for taxi related licences.

6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The impact of the proposals is perceived to be neutral.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An environmental assessment has been undertaken which revealed a neutral impact.

8 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 8.1 Article of Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph:4b
8.2 Referred or delegated power?: Delegated.

9 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 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).

- North Devon Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

11 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

- a. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager 08.11.22