

Licensing Committee

15 June 2021

Taxi Licensing Policy

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jill Haynes (Customer and Community Services)

Local Councillor(s): Relevant to all Dorset Council Members

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: John Newcombe

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

- 1) To agree that the draft Taxi Policy (attached as Appendix A to this report) be published for a period of public consultation of not less than 12 weeks.
- 2) That, subject to their being no relevant representations that the Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety, in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee recommends adoption of the Draft Licensing Policy.
- 3) Should relevant representations be received, which require consideration of one or more significant amendments to the policy, instruct officers to bring a further report to the meeting of the Licensing Committee with the outcomes of the consultation.

Reason for Recommendation:

- 1) To ensure openness and transparency in the Council's decision making, and
- 2) To ensure that those persons affected by the policy are given the opportunity to have an input into it.

1. Executive Summary

The Council, as Licensing Authority under the Town Police Clause Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, require a single policy to provide consistency across the district. The purpose of the policy is to define how the Council will exercise its responsibilities under the Act. The draft policy has been prepared by officers after consideration of responses from several focus groups. The draft is now ready to be considered by the Licensing Committee in preparation for it to be published, in draft format, for a period of public consultation, of not less than 12 weeks.

2. Financial Implications

The funding for the preparation and consultation of the draft statement of licensing policy will come from existing budgets and there are no further financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

3. Climate implications

There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

4. Other Implications

There are implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council.

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached as Appendix B to this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A Draft Taxi Policy January 2022

Appendix B Draft Equalities Impact Assessment

8. Background Papers

[Town Police Clauses Act 1847](#)

[Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976](#)

[Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Guidance \(July 2020\)](#)

[Institute of Licensing - Safe and Suitable](#)

[Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Best Practice Guidance \(March 2010\)](#)

[FTA National Inspection Standards \(August 2012\)](#)

9. Background

9.1. The Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that Licensing Authorities have a publicly available document that brings together all the procedures on taxi and private hire licensing.

9.2. The overriding objective of the policy is to protect the public.

9.3. The DfT recommends that taxi policies are reviewed every five years, with interim reviews carried out if significant issues arise during the five years.

9.4. The activities that are regulated cover the licensing of: -

- Hackney carriage vehicles
- Hackney carriage drivers
- Private hire vehicles
- Private hire drivers
- Private hire operators

9.5. The taxi policy has been prepared with regard to, and sought to integrate with, the following Council strategies:

- Dorset Council Plan
- Dorset Council Community Safety Plan
- Dorset Council's Economic Growth Strategy
- Dorset Council's Enforcement Policy

9.6. This is Dorset Council's first Taxi Licensing Policy and Officers have prepared the draft policy with reference to the predecessor council policies and also through engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties through focus groups carried out through March 2021.

- 9.7. Prior to the formation of Dorset Council, each of the predecessor District and Borough Councils had their Policies setting out how they would process hackney carriage and private hire matters. Due consideration of these policies has been taken when drafting the Dorset Council Taxi Policy and any areas of good practice have been retained and developed.
- 9.8. The new policy will be supported by a new fee structure for applications that will look to consolidate the current fees to ensure the income raised covers the cost of the taxi licensing function.
- 9.9. It is proposed to carry out the public consultation for a period of not less than 12 weeks. The consultation includes consulting with and considering the views of a wide range of individuals and organisations including:
- All current licence holders
 - Local residents
 - Local Councillors
 - Parish and town councils
 - Local members of parliament
 - Dorset Police
 - Dorset Council – Adults Services
 - Dorset Council – School Contracts Service
 - Dorset Council – Highways
 - Dorset Council – Children’s Services
 - Dorset Council – Legal Services
 - Dorset Council - Fleet
 - Neighbouring Authorities
 - Dorset Disability Forum
- 9.10. Following the period of consultation officers will analyse any responses and should none be received it is recommended that the Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety, in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee recommends adoption of the Draft Licensing Policy.
- 9.11. Should responses to the consultation be received, officers will recommend amendments to the draft policy where appropriate or give reasons why suggested alterations are not made and prepare a report for the Licensing Committee with a final draft policy for committee to consider for adoption.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.